

Rambles in Cuba
by GEORGE W. CARLETON,
1870.

In the Tropics—First View of Havana—Entering the Bay—Surrounded—Landed—A Street in Havana—"Queen's Hotel"—A Breakfast—The Harbor—The Coolies—The Plaza de Armas—Cuban Women—A Volante—Fine Avenues—A Priest—Shopping.

Havana, March 1, 18—.

THE first dawn of day found me already on deck, to assure myself we had really arrived at the shores of a tropical-world.

I was not disenchanted. A mist had possessed, like a dream, the blue quiet of the entire bay, half dissolving its masts and sails, softening the picturesque battlements of Morro Castle, throwing over the walls, domes, and spires of the city an air of hoary distance so complete that I half fancied those solitary palm-trees waved their arms over some city half-buried in the mirage of deserts, or the pages of some mediæval romance.

But the dream departs, and so must we. Stirring music from the two men-of-war lying at anchor unite with the first sounds from the long, low barracks close by, and with the signal guns from the Morro, to say that the sun is risen, and consequently we may go on shore.

First comes the pilot,—a stout Spaniard in supernaturally white trousers and inexplicably thick overcoat. He sits under the awning of his boat, and is rowed by twelve bronze, attenuated creoles, dressed in wide-mouthed jackets, bare feet, much hair,—a few wearing turbans.

The steps are lowered; the pilot comes on deck, says good-morning to the captain, in dislocated English, and goes forward to his duty.

We make the difficult entrance of the bay, to find ourselves assailed by every species of small craft. All have awnings, are rowed by negroes, black to hyperbole (B— says coal would make a white mark on them), or by coolies, or creoles; and all are importuning us, with frantic gestures, imploring or menacing looks, bad Spanish or worse English, to let them carry us ashore.

Here come boats laden with oranges, or shells, corals, and sponges for sale; there a pocket edition of a steamboat brings the health-officer,—without whose inspection no one can come here, even for his health,—and presently a more elegantly ornamented boat, with oarsmen in livery, brings the Captain-General's aid-de-camp, dressed as if freshly

emerged from a Paris bandbox, and anxiously inquiring if there is news from Spain. Captain —— replies that there is a victory over the Moors, and that he brings important dispatches from the Spanish minister at Washington, which he must deliver in person. Therewith he accompanies the officer to the Government House, the bundle of documents under his arm.

Meanwhile the passengers are in great perplexity what hotel to go to, and I am beginning to feel that sense of desolation and isolation so natural to a stranger in a strange land, when B—— appears, bringing a gentleman with a kindly English face, and introduces Mr. S——. At once we are at home and in safe hands. His boat waits for us. In five minutes we are in the Custom House to get a permit in exchange for our passports (for both an enormous fee is demanded), and to await the luggage. This is soon ranged on great tables before us; all the trunks are opened at once; travellers, servants, Spaniards, negroes, anybody, as well as the officials, can critically inspect the mysteries of ladies' linen and laces.

The hotel being distant but a block, we walk in the street. A Cuban lady would as soon think of walking a rope, and would do it as well.

Do not figure to yourself Broadway: when I talk of a street in Havana, I mean a fissure; an opening, in extremely straitened circumstances, between two stone walls, which the Cubans, being diminutive people, are able to get through. The sidewalks are in proportion. By dint of cautious and careful attention to the exigencies of my centre of gravity, I was able much of the time to get a foothold on the outer edge of them, while my crinoline, repulsed by the wall on one side, attracted in self-defence Mr. S——, who walked down in the street on the other.

We have not even time to glance at the inconceivable novelties on every hand, for "Queen's Hotel", the first English sign we have seen, is here over the arched gateway. We walk through an open passage leading to the court, and up the marble steps to an elegant saloon. This hotel, like every other in the city, is overflowing; so we are obliged to take, for a few days, "the room behind the curtain;" that is, one end of the parlor, with only a calico wall between our prospective sleep and the rows—not groups—of English, Irish, French, but mostly American guests. I say rows, because the chairs here are always placed in two straight lines in front of the long open windows, thus bringing their occupants in a perpetual vis-à-vis.

Meantime, Creole and negro waiters are bringing in breakfast to the adjoining room, which, is partitioned from the airy courtyard only by

high arches and pillars. Every thing looks temptingly fresh and clean,—quite the reverse of all we have heard of the filth and bad cooking of Cuba. Fried fruits in great variety, numerous mosaics from the animal, vegetable, and I know not what kingdoms of nature, of which I can only remember the name picadille, vary the bill of fare. Café au lait comes in after breakfast is over.

Night.—All day guns have been firing, flags flying from balconies, windows, and housetops, and endless preparations for a grand illumination to-night in honor of the victory.

This afternoon we took the steam ferry across the bay, to get a view of the harbor decked with its flags, and to see the sugar storehouses on the other shore.

This is our first sight of coolies in native costume and usual Cuban occupation. They look not only small, but weak, and extremely feminine in face and form. They are mostly naked to the waist, where some sort of a sash confines short loose trousers, and, in the boys, nothing at all. The faces, more cheerful and adroit in expression than those of the negroes, are of a brown reddish hue, as if the light came upon them from a bright copper sun.

To-night we walked to the Plaza de Armas. It is filled with trees, four of them palms, and with blooming flowers, mostly large, brilliant, odorless, and unknown to me. During all this time, the band played sweetly from the opera of Lucia de Lammermoor, and swarthy, moustached and cigared men, and gaudily-dressed and ill-walking ladies, promenaded round and round the walks, while their carriages waited outside the gates.

How opaque are these faces! The outside is well enough, admirably chiselled and toned, but it does not hint of anything behind. They too often lack the only beautiful features that can be in a man's face,—intellect and sensibility. I wonder where Cuban people keep their souls! Yet for all that, this is a scene of enchantment,—the intense light in those stars, buried so deep in the intense blue; the dazzling brightness of the vertical moon, that makes everybody walk upon his own shadow; the pure breeze, coming fresh from over the sea; the many lights from the palace balconies, revealing high, open windows, and through them gay forms and foreign aspects.

Friday, March 2.—This morning stayed in my room to rest, for I have commenced with too large doses of the tropics. But who can rest in the midst of thunderings like these,—guns, bands of music, shouts of rejoicing? I hope the Spaniards will not gain any more victories over the

Moors until I get away from them.

This evening my first ride in a volante. Cuba is more Spanish than Spain itself: for here we have the quaint, the characteristic Spain; the Spain as it was when Don Quixote created it and was created by it; the Spain isolated; the Spain which Paris and European civilization have little touched or tainted; the Spain which, in want of religion, has the absence of progression. But these grotesque volantes! They strike me as something saved whole out of the general change and wreck of the past. They consist of two long shafts, with a little low-seated and low-topped kind of a tête-à-tête at one end, which usually contains three bright, gauzy clouds, enveloping three plump, dark-eyed ladies in bare head, neck, and arms,—the youngest and prettiest always between and a little in front of the other two. At the other end of the shafts is fastened a minute horse; his tail is carefully braided, and tied with a string to the left side of the saddle, upon which sits, the postillion, in boots and livery. Sometimes a second horse is added, upon which the postillion sits to guide the first; but this is superfluous, and merely, like the rich mountings of silver on the horse and volante, to display the wealth of the owner.

The gait of these horses is peculiar and indescribable. It is not a trot, nor a pace, nor a canter, but a kind of combination of all, and disdainful avoidance of each. It is a parody on quadrupedal peripatetics. They are born to it. It is hereditary. It never entered into the head—or rather feet—of a Cuban Rozinante, that there are horses in the world not orthodox in this mode of locomotion. It gives the rider, too, the most ridiculous motion imaginable,—as if the saddle were a cushion, but a pin-cushion, with the pins stuck the wrong way.

Mr. S——, who accompanied us, said, on our return, that, when paying the callisero, he asked him if he had an escudo in change. “Oh, yes!” said the darkey, and took the coin out of his ear.

We drove at once past the walls of the city, upon the Paseo de Isabel Segunda and the Paseo Tacon,—said to be the finest avenues in this hemisphere,—with their five or six rows of magnificent palms, their smooth, broad roads, statues, fountains, and gardens, and, far in the distance, the luxurious plains, the graceful green slopes of hills and mountains, the wonderfully tall, solitary palms and cocoa-trees, standing like imposing sentinels to keep the voluptuous vegetation from running riot, and over all the doting sunlight bathing its pet island in a never-ending tide of fervor.

No wonder these people love gay hues, paint their houses in the brightest colors, wear dresses and carry umbrellas dyed in rainbows;

for nature sets the example of brilliancy everywhere. The phosphoric waters surrounding the island reply to every touch, every question, of oar, with "colors dipped in heaven." Even the smallest fishes have, almost without exception, selected their scaly wardrobes from prismatic excesses.

Last evening a game of whist, with a Catholic priest to complete the party. He is a charming, accomplished Irishman; is more clever at repartee, and more graceful in compliment, than any man I ever saw. What infinitely delicate things he said! and all with as much feeling as if he had learned both flattery and feeling in courts, instead of catechisms. But he is so extravagantly fond of the game, and scolded B—— so tempestuously, yet politely, for little mistakes, that I was thankful to have the indulgent face of Mr. S—— for partner, instead of that of the charming priest. He deplores the religious condition of Cuba, and ridicules every thing else in it; shrugs his shoulders sententiously at all these patriotic ebullitions, and declares that volantes are just fit to carry chickens in. I even heard him, yesterday, at breakfast, imitating the sing-song tone of the Cuban priests in their masses, the comical expression of his face equalling the irresistibly funny intonations of his voice.

Saturday evening, March 3d.—A shopping excursion, with Mr. S—— for guide and interpreter. In some shops they knew a little French, but less English. I was obliged to use French for articles of attire which Mr. S—— could not manage in Spanish, and, among us all—three or four clerks usually looking on to help and laugh—I think a linguistical hash was concocted as droll as any vegetable or animal arrangement that comes on our hotel tables; and that is saying a great deal, when you consider the oils, peppers, and garlicks that are pressed into the service.

Here merchants do not name the shops after themselves, as Americans do, but more modestly and tastefully. The shop is christened with a name of its own, as in Europe. For instance, on one corner you have Pobre Diablo (Poor Devil), and on the corner opposite Rico Diablo (Rich Devil); then we have all the saints—and sinners—in the Calendar, so that the shop can change hands without losing its identity. Shops containing magnificent goods have often a very humble appearance, because ladies do not walk the streets, or leave their volantes—those darling volantes, which are their feet, their couches, their homes, the body of which they are the soul, and which I have many times seen standing, much at home, in the corners of their parlors! So all the goods are kept in great boxes, and carried out to the volantes, where my lady condescends to sit in state and in attire to inspect, and, without knowing it, to pay twice the value of all she buys.

On coming home, we took another turn in the Plaza de Armas, where festivities still continue. We are fortunate to be here at this time, for it is a continual holiday, and will be so nearly all of next week. Illuminations of all sorts, fine bands of music, awnings and flags of red and yellow,—the national colors of Spain,—carriages and volantes full of richly-dressed people, promenaders in Sunday-costume—all these are to be met in every street of the city. I have been much amused at promiscuous Moors in effigy, hanging out of the windows, in the centre of huge doorways, or dangling from a cord over our heads in the middle of the street. They are usually in full Moorish costume, and pierced pathetically through the heart. Our driver flourished his whip vigorously in passing, mostly ending by a patriotic cut at the devoted images.

Close by this promenade we found a refreshing seat and ice-cream in the famous Dominica. The cream was fruit-flavored and built up pyramidally in an overgrown wineglass. On the plate under it, lay a long brown coil, looking like a cigar, and tasting like a baked combination of brown sugar, well-beaten eggs, and flour. This is designed as a spoon to eat the towering cream with, and to eat with the towering cream. Many ladies sit at the tables, but more remain before the doors and windows in their volantes, receiving sweet liquids from the waiters, and dispensing sweeter and more liquid glances to the admiring cavaliers gathered around them.

II.

Celebrating a Victory—General Serrano—a Cuban Sacristan—His View of Mary Magdalene—Sunday—The Theatre de Tacon—General Serrano's Wife—A "Norther"—The Fish Market—Brilliancy of the Fish—A Venerable Cosmopolite—The Slaves—The Chain Gang—The Cerro—A Count's Country-house—No Twilight—Oranges—Polyglot Dinner—Lottery Ticket.

Sunday, March 4th.

THIS morning high mass was celebrated, and the Te Deum sung in the Cathedral. As this is in honor of the victory, all the church dignitaries and officers of state were in attendance, dressed in their respective uniforms. First came Captain-General Serrano, whose title in Spain is Marquis de San Antonio. He is heralded by a grand flourish of martial music from the band, which had just played the national air of Spain. He is a rather fine-looking man, with a massive bald head and penetrating eye; the countenance expressing weight of character,

stirring experiences in life, a consciousness of power and responsibility. He is said to be the father of two of the children of the Queen of Spain. Her marble statue has just been erected in one of the principal squares, and is nightly illuminated to receive the admiration and homage of the loyal multitude. Following him, as next in office, comes the Governor of the Island, whose resemblance to Mr. S—— has often caused them to be mistaken for each other; the latter sometimes finding honors thrust upon him of which he is wholly unambitious. Then come all the military, civil, and marine officers, in gold lace, epaulets, ribbons, stars, and decorations of all devices, the whole retinue filling the church, except the centre, where a few ladies in black veils kneel upon bright-colored mats, which servants in livery bring under their arms and spread for the ladies' dainty dresses to cover. A few of these mats are brought by negresses with shawls thrown over their heads instead of veils. As soon as the mat is spread, the mistress drops upon it, crossing herself too rapidly and adroitly for Protestant eyes to follow, all the time saying her prayers and looking devoutly at the image of the Virgin standing in the centre of the altar. The negress kneels respectfully upon the bare floor by her side or behind her. Mr. S—— pointed out to me several counts, marquises, and other notabilities, refreshing to the republicanism of Yankee optics. Meanwhile the chancel is filling with bishops, priest, and friars, in magnificent costumes, and soon the grand Te Deum swells over the kneeling multitude. Governor, lords, ladies, and soldiers, bowed on the same floor with the negro slave. It floats on over the floating incense; then it ascends and seems to pause like a halo around the painted heads of saints and apostles listening in the ceiling. Just in front of us knelt Count——, a friend of Mr. S——, leaning upon a diamond-headed cane, and looking incessantly at his watch, to see how soon the ceremonies and unaccustomed posture would come to an end.

After all was over, the sacristan, dressed in a blue woollen gown and wide embroidered white cambric collar, escorted us over the edifice. Its external, so quaint and unique, so like a relic of the middle ages, with towers and walls marred and rent, and crumbling with the rapid effects of the moist climate rather than of time, did not indicate so much beauty and art as existed within. It is chiefly in the Moorish style, the numerous paintings mostly from Rome, and nearly all copies from the best masters. The sacristan made himself jolly; offered to robe me in the bishop's vestments and ornament me with the crosiers, and staffs, and mitres, and what-nots, in the robing-room. But I, being less familiar with these sacred emblems than he, felt less contempt, and declined the honor. One of the paintings, a dark old dilapidated affair hanging in an ante-room, represents Christ talking earnestly to Mary Magdalene. She turns her coquettish head from him in a most coquettish way, and with a look of more affected than real shame and sorrow. The old fellow

pointed it out to us, and, with a significant twinkle, said to Mr. S——, in Spanish,—

“That was Jesus Christ’s woman.”

To Mr. S——’s exclamation of astonishment, he replied,—

“Of course he was a man, like the rest of us.”

We paused before the modest tomb of Columbus, whose remains were interred in the chancel of the Cathedral many years ago, with respectful ceremonies and magnificence. His bas-relief in marble is placed in much the same position as the bust of Shakspeare in the Avon church. From the Cathedral we passed to the miniature garden separating it from the seminary. This contains flowers, trees, shrubs, a fountain in the centre. The sacristan picked me a bouquet of pretty purple and pink blossoms without odor, bowing to my “gracias” most graciously, and upon receiving a little fee, instead of “begging for two reals more,” as D—— says he did upon his departure, the old man seemed surprised that he received anything at all.

Staid American eyes are struck by the spiritual stolidity of these people. Favorites of nature, crowned forever by her flowers, inspired by her fresh and friendly breezes, basking always in her fondest sunlight, they receive all these gifts in forgetfulness of the giver. It being Sunday, all kinds of festivities riot in increased abandonment. The shops, unlike those of most towns in Europe, are open; tailors and shoemakers are at their work in little dark dens resembling those to which the mechanics of Naples retreat on rainy days; and, though forbidden by law, Sunday trade flourishes thriftily, as if Sundays and religions were an impertinent restriction upon a Cuban’s right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Monday, 5th.—This morning we walked on the Cortina to inhale the cool sea breezes which there defy the scorching tyranny of even this sun. How refreshing, after panting through those hot, fuming, dusty, noisy streets, to sit under that dense shade, upon the marble seats, with the tired city hidden behind you, and the blue tranquil bay sleeping in its brightness before! The Morro lies peacefully on the other side, brown, and dim, and silent as a weary lion. From the lighthouse of the castle are floating flags of various colors, to me inexplicable. But Mr. S—— explains. The different shapes and colors indicate the kind and nationality of any vessel that is descried making for the port; so that long before even the glasses of watchers in the city can discern anything, it is known by these flags that preparations must be made to receive the newcomer; that friends are approaching, or friends must be

left behind; that partings and meetings are to resume their tyranny in the world.

Evening.—The Theatre de Tacon, or Opera House, disappointed us. It is large, airy, and convenient, but plain and bare to a degree. It being “Commandment Night,”—that is, the Captain-General having signified his intention of being present, and the rejoicings not yet over—the usual opera was omitted. First, a national anthem, sung by one hundred performers. Then followed a Spanish comedy, capitally acted, I could be sure, though as good as ignorant of the language. Then came some divine airs from the opera of the Bohemian Girl, sung by Gassier. Her voice is full, sustained, in some passages, touching. But the embonpoint! Alas, why must women of the poetical South always be so unpoetically fat! Or why are we not blind to the incongruity of passion and adipose tissue. These Spaniards are critical and enthusiastic judges of music; never tolerate a bad thing; applaud and hiss vociferously.

But to me the attraction of the evening was the lovely marquise, wife of the Captain-General (sometimes I can understand how a port may be absolutely panic-struck with a woman’s beauty). A Creole by birth, with a fortune of several millions, she married Serrano, who became ambassador to France, where he spent the greater part of her wealth in maintaining the honor of Spain, by a magnificence which is said to have eclipsed that of the Emperor. So he is sent here to recruit; that is, to rob the Cubans of a million or two, as his predecessors have done. The Governor’s box was only two boxes from ours, so that I could distinctly watch every shade of her expression. La señora looked sad, absent; she assumes a pensive attitude irresistibly charming in one so lovely and so necessarily the observed of all observers. Her personal charms are enough to excite all the enthusiasm the Cubans feel for her, but her Creole birth renders it unbounded. She wore her dark hair thrown back from a completely classical head and face; a subdued fire indicating rare power of passion and suffering burns in her eyes; her nose, mouth, and chin, are full of sensitive delicacy; in every curve of the exquisite bust and slender figure, grace achieves a very pathos of perfection. She was draped in some gauzy fabric floating about her like a dream; large dark roses on hair, bosom, and dress, the only ornament. People say she sighs for the life in Paris, and that she was for a long time the rival of the Empress. Who knows? who can unravel the web of suffering which stifles out the life and hope from any woman’s heart? The most comical scenes scarcely wakened a smile on her face; but her husband, sitting at her right, smiled and patted his white kids with very accurate and well-timed condescension. The box in which they sat is gaily hung, the national coat of arms placed over the centre. They went out between every act to receive guests in an

adjoining saloon. We found more beauty among the women than writers on Cuba had promised us. Regular, I may say, exquisite, features are very common; and these, illuminated by dark, deep eyes, with effective and well-manœuvred glances, make as lovely women as is possible, where intellect and soul seem to exile themselves behind so much of what elsewhere than on a lady would be called fat. All are in full, the fullest possible, dress; all are displaying great eloquence of skill in manipulating their lace and jewelled fans; all are, or aspire to be, the magnets for the dark, handsome eyes and well-levelled opera-glasses in the pit below. It was curious, among all that tumultuous sea of masculine heads in the parquette, to see not one with fair hair—all black with youth, gray with manhood, white or bald with age.

Tuesday, 6th.—The thermometer has fallen from 90 to 75 degrees. This is the result of a “norther,” which drives the cold waters of the Atlantic furiously into our bay; changes the usual moist perspiring atmosphere into a husky dryness; turns the roads, almost the paving-stones, into dust; shrivels and browns the foliage in the country; and with its cold puts the low-necked dresses, pantings, and fans of our hotel-ladies in their trunks. So we ventured on a walk, even at high noon, to our favorite Cortina, keeping on the shady side, and stopping at the fish market. It is palpably true that God set his dyed bow in the heavens; but I did not before know that he also set it in the floods to reassure us that we should have no more floods,—else where did these fishes learn this trick of exaggerated brightness? Of all the myriads ranged on the endlessly long metallic tables, I do not remember one in quaker costume. Everywhere a fantastic variety of colors and gradations and combinations of shades. Joseph’s coat would have looked plain beside them. May not the excessive phosphorescence, latent, or developed in the native waters of these fishes, explain in some way their pre-eminence of color?

Wednesday, March 7th.—At last we have a room possessing the fundamental doctrines of a room, viz., four walls of its own. It was formerly the library of the bishop, who built the palace and lived in it several years, and is now, by the way, enormously rich, and “they say” hints not egregiously pious. Our room has an ambitious window, from which we always see the sky, and nothing else. The door, protected by fanciful iron gratings, opens upon the dining-room. The floor, of the usual black and white marble, resembles a chess-board with the squares placed diagonally. As queen of this chess-board, I am in a fair way to be checkmated, as well as its king, if the jolly priest continues his jolly suppers. The rest of the room would suit me well enough, if it were not so discouragingly convenient. With the exception of a kind of wooden-tiled ceiling, and one of the beds furnished with stretched

canvass instead of a mattress, you might suppose yourself commonplacely domiciled in a respectable hotel in Yankeedom.

Thursday, 8th.—This morning Mr. S. brought his venerable friend Mr. R ——. He is a Frenchman, though born in Baltimore and educated in England; has lived indefinitely on the Continent; is waiting to die in Cuba. He is delightful, thoroughly a cosmopolite, speaks many languages, knows everything and everybody. Long intimacy with this government, its officers, and many of the nobility, has made him au fait in the policy and intrigues as well as customs and characteristics of the island. Lady Wortly is indebted to him for her anecdotes of Cuba. I have been able to correct many false impressions received from various writers; for instance:—

The line of separation between Creoles and Spaniards is not distinctly drawn. The Creoles sympathize in these victorious rejoicings; would be perfectly satisfied with an allegiance to Spain, if they could have a voice in their own government. Creole ladies are lighter in color, better educated, less rigid in forms of etiquette and propriety than the Spanish. But everywhere the negro blood is so intermixed, that it is impossible to make a distinct separation between any of the races; a fact of difficult management in the event of self-government, or any step towards it. He says there are not fifty families in the island untainted by African blood. It seems very natural that a dark race should have less repugnance to a black race than white people have.

We all know the greater leniency of the laws here, with regard to slaves, than in the United States. I find, in addition, that there is, in Cuba, much more indulgence and affection between master and slave, unless it be on the remote plantations. In our drives, particularly through the suburbs, I continually see negroes and their Creole mistresses, dressed equally well, lounging on the balconies, not as equals, but in a way that indicates affectionate intimacy, and a gayety too abundant to suggest the true *dolce far niente*. I am told that, almost without exception, masters here would be willing to free their slaves in case of remuneration.

Among the many foolish arrangements of this government, the chain-gang seems to be a wise one. It is a penitentiary on the highway. My author on Cuba, says of this chain-gang, "It is Sunday; but no rest for them." The truth is, they always rest on Sunday, unless unusual circumstances occur; as, for instance, a road that must be finished for some great occasion.

Thursday evening, March 9th.—This evening drove to the Cerro, three miles distant, to visit the country house of Count Fernandino, an

intimate friend of Mr. R——, who accompanied us. Contrary to Mr. R——'s expectations, the family, consisting of the old widowed count, and his son and daughter-in-law, had not yet left their winter residence in the city. An old family servant, however, conducted us everywhere, with equal pride and pleasure. The house is a quaint, irregular structure. You stumble everywhere upon recesses, balconies, unexpected rooms, and general surprises. In the drawing-room are two genuine Claude Lorraines, and two Vernets. I was sorry to be hurried away from them to the billiard-room; the octagon library, the high, large, open piazza, roofed with vines and paved with marble, where two hundred dancers find fantastic toe-room; the curious chambers, busts, statues, curiosities everywhere.

But the grounds we only saw from the tower, and without them we have seen nothing. They are extensive and beautiful; here a rustic bridge crosses the mysteriously winding brook which branches into a fanciful bathing-house, hung with pictures of naiads and water-gods; there stands a little airy temple overhung by dotting cypresses, and sacred to its only inhabitant,—an exquisite marble Venus. Wherever chance leads your steps, it will be sure to reveal some new beauty of tree, or flower, or shrub, or arbor, or rustic seat; some avenue looking far out upon the wonderful campagna. As the short and sudden twilight comes, a lovely waterfall catches the light coming from the distant Morro, with level, and distinct, and separate rays over the city spires and roofs, over its pale, irregularly planted lights and absorbing shadows. Many of the trees and shrubs are from Europe and Asia. The gardener gave me a spray from an Australian tree, imported when a small slip, for which the count paid seven hundred dollars. He also gave me two handfuls of bouquets, some of them from his own private nursery, by which he makes a hundred dollars per month, in addition to his wages. Mr. R—— tells me that, in the last hurricane, most of the trees in these grounds were prostrated; that he saw the count and countess, when they first discovered the desolation, crying like children. The great difficulty in gardening here is to repress vegetation, it being nearly impossible to curb its rank luxuriance. If left to itself, any garden will in two or three years become a dense impenetrable tangle of trees, vines, flowers, and weeds. But it is time to hurry away from all this loveliness. A few minutes ago we were watching the sunset emparadising both heaven and earth; now, before we have time for a second sigh at its departure, night has dropped upon us like a silent and intangible avalanche, with no interluding, apologetic twilight to warn or to reconcile us.

March 10th.—Rose this morning, as usual, at six. So soon as bathed and dressed, commenced the day in the customary national style; namely, by a vigorous attack upon a pyramid of huge oranges, which B

—— has just brought in, paying twelve cents for ten. He gives me two-thirds of each, for the remaining third and the privilege of peeling them. I am commanded by high authority to devour twelve every morning; until I achieve that I cannot be said to like oranges, or even to eat them.

After the nine o'clock breakfast, appeared the white head of Mr. R——, and, immediately after, a portable set of chess-men, with which he challenged me to a game. He has not played much for twenty-eight years. I did not play much before that time; so, not unequally yoked together, we fought long and desperately; and who do you think won? My modesty declines to answer.

Dinner at four, with the usual English courses and bill of fare, except an interspersing of here and there a Spanish or French dish; for instance, —garlic, onions, and oil, flavored with a piece of stewed beef; or, further down the table, the same trio thinly populated with tripe and potatoes; or, on two cross corners of each table, a square pile of rice, polished with oil and rouged with juice of tomatoes. Then many new fruits, as the manna, sapote, and others which I will describe when I know them better. By five o'clock we have usually manifested fully our approval of all dinners in general, and of polyglott dinners in particular. The café noir is then dispatched to make the peace, and we are ready for the cigar, the drive, or the siesta. I do not quite yet smoke the cigars myself as I see many Havaneese ladies doing; but I have bought a lottery ticket!—the ninth—and the drawing comes on the 22d inst. Never say you have been to Havana, unless you have bought a lottery ticket. They are a native production.

III.

Drive to the Sea-shore—Evening Boat-ride—Splendor of the Waters—Campo del Marte—Low Mass—The “Madonna”—Beautiful Children—Church of San Filipo—Sacred Names—The Mount of Jesus—Corruption of the Clergy—Cuba Misrepresented in Books—Growing “used to it”—A Creole—Cascarilla—Warm Weather—The Cortina.

Saturday, March 11th.

THIS morning we drove, or more properly rode, for no one drives in a volante, to the sea-shore. Although the sun was burning down upon us with his customary ardor, a “norther” cooled his fever so effectually as to make a thick shawl necessary. Thicker boots were indispensable to save the feet from the sharp points of coral rocks over which we must walk, upon leaving the volante. With the assistance of our “norther,” a high tide dashed the waves in furious beauty over the low, unresisting shore, and with a muffled thunder straight out of the heart of infinity. I

wonder if any familiarity can ever breed a feeling of even acquaintanceship with this “roar of torn ocean.” Was it not a pretty scene for us as we stood there,—the graceful, yet frowning Morro, with its white wave-washed feet, growing from the promontory across the bay, its fluttering flags foretelling ships like a presentiment, its towers warming and brightening in the parting smiles of the sun, with a very human pathos of joy! Far out on the restless sea, more restless ships toss and tack and veer their sails; clouds, dream thin, and sunset-souled. How blue they make the sea! How white the dark waves are painting them!

Behind us in the west rises a rough, high bluff, flanked by endless lines of barracks; on the outer wall, a solitary sentinel paces and watches us; under its shadow stands our waiting volante and the sunburnt callisero. Nothing more is visible except the sky-questioning palms behind the bluff—far in the south the strange city of this strange clime. Nothing anywhere is familiar save the quiet, tender sky above; and that is so blue, so intense, so twice a sky, so profound in its passion of beauty, that you wonder how sorrow and death can live beneath it!

I do not marvel that the people of sun-lands do not greatly aspire, or labor, or achieve. What need of this threefold weariness, this getting of spiritual bread by spiritual brain-sweat, when happiness falls down upon their heads all day long out of the sky; when feeling, which is a thousand times better than thought, buds and blossoms out of every sunbeam, and night is but a sudden sigh, a languishing wink of this regal lover between caresses.

Evening.—And the most interesting we have spent in Havana.

To describe a boat-ride upon the phosphorescent waters of this bay, one should, alas! have some powers of description. I can only outline it in a homely way and leave the rest to your imagination.

All our previous nights have been without twilight. The only apparent change was in the color, not the quality, of light; the warm gold, blanching into a colder, purer blaze, fitting the mind and eye for its enjoyment: it is the quantity not the intensity of daylight. But to-night the sun dies under the western sea, and an azure which is neither light nor darkness, fills the void. The stars discover through it their happy images below, and our throbbing oars—oars no longer, but living light—rival the pulsations of the stars.

All this time our “trackless way” is distinctly blazing far behind, while far below our cutting keel leaves its cicatrice; an antipodean milky-way, and our prow, like a Yankee boreas, carries its snowcloud in its teeth.

There flies a fish with planetary speed, invisible in air, but in its native element a mistress "at home." Even the oscillation of our little boat causes flashes of softest light in the surrounding air, by which our faces are brightened to reveal the beautiful peace and pleasure each feels.

We lean and look in the water at our side, and see the myriad scintillations that come and go with ever-changing variety, and then think, that to each spark is attached an organized body, with circulating medium and force, with sensations more or less acute; and that in this bay of some three square miles, is a galaxy of worlds; every globule a world of itself, inhabited by perfect and sentient beings, each with its hopes, fears, and perhaps its loves and hates, and therefore sorrows; and then we remember that the whole tropical waters which girdle the globe are equally crowded with life.

Saturday, 11th.—The rejoicings profess to have reached a patriotic climax,—a grand display of all the troops on the island, which is twice the number of the whole military force of the United States. With the only vacant seat in our English carriage filled at last by our venerable friend Mr. N——, we drove out to the Campo del Marte. We found it difficult and delightful, steering our way through the archipelago of carriages and volantes filled with ladies in full ball costume, many of the faces and figures striking, a few very handsome; so that with well-rewarded patience and time, we obtained a good position.

The poverty of republican eyes is imbibantly observant of all appurtenances of royalty. First dashes past the knighted Governor-General, doffing cap and plume, and bowing with great dignity to the bowing multitude. Following are body-guard and staff, counts, marquises, and other nobility in uniform, crosses and decorations of honor.

The gentlemen informed me that the troops marched well. I am sure the regiments of negroes thought so, and enjoyed the supposition. We returned home to whist and delightful conversation on all things new and old, followed by the most cordial imaginable of good-nights and hand-shakings.

Sunday.—Early this morning to a Jesuit mass—low mass, and so very low that it could not be heard at all. Two priests only officiated, both meek-faced, keeping "custody of eyes;" one of them with the most remarkable intellectual and characteristic head I ever saw, the other with the devoutest, purest face. All the devotees, mostly women and girls, and liveried servants, knelt upon mats placed over the marble floor. All the ladies were gracefully arrayed in black lace Spanish veils, which, like moonlight on the Coliseum, "leaves that beautiful which still

was so, and makes that which was not." They were repeating their prayers; those who could read, from books, those who could not, from memory; and all the time the young and pretty ones were rolling their dark fascinating eyes around upon my escort of gentlemen, except when the moment came for crossing themselves and looking devoutly towards an image of the Virgin execrably done in wax.

I find the only way to extract good instead of disgust from scenes like this, is to ignore the wax and the tawdry ornaments, and to remember only the divinely sweet woman who loved Christ as I fear none of us have loved him; who suffered for him as none of us shall be honored by suffering for him; the only woman who united to the virgin's charm the mother's hallowing rapture; the woman whom God loved more than all earthly women, making her the mother of his son. You must think of the sanctity she has given to all motherhood. You must remember the elevation and delicacy she has given to the love of many pure and wise priests, who through the dark centuries loved no woman but her; who centred in her the love that might not be human nor for the human. Think of all this, and then see if you can wonder that the devout imaginations of the learned as well as of the ignorant Romanist have found a female element in the Trinity, and in worshipping the Father and Son have also most tenderly adored her who was a link between them; her through whom God is no longer an avenging God, and through whom Christ longs and makes ready for us.

The church, to my great surprise, though belonging to the Jesuits, displays no wealth and no taste; forlornly ugly pictures, clumsy tawdry flowers, and atrocious statues everywhere. Many things, however, were interesting enough to repay us for the trouble of getting up so early and walking so far.

Nothing could surpass the extremely graceful attitude of the ladies, or the universal beauty of the children, especially of the boys. How exquisitely regular and clear cut are their features! how transparent their large, soft, black eyes! how intelligent their whole expression! I am told that all Spanish boys and girls are remarkably precocious. At thirteen they promise to be geniuses, sing, paint, even write poetry that would not only startle a Northern mother, but frighten her with a certainty of the imminent dissolution of her cherub. After that age the tropical child remains savingly in statu quo, if he does not perceptibly degenerate.

Having still twenty minutes before breakfast, we drove quickly to the fashionable church of San Filipo. Found it having more pretension than the Jesuit ("Belen") church, but not more taste. Abundance of tinsel, plenty of yellowed grotesque, semi-arabesque carvings on tinselled

columns and what-not, but no beauty, unless, perchance, under the happy veil of some worshipping angel.

Sunday evening.—Is it a question of piety, or of taste, that so many places have holy names? “Jesus dil monto” “Jesus Maria,” “Las dace Apostles;” the latter being a battery of guns under the Morro, intended to convert enemies’ ships into enemies’ wrecks—a highly apostolic mode of conversion.

To end our Sabbath we ascended the Mount of Jesus and walked in a garden of cocoa-trees supposed to occupy relatively the position of Gethsemane.

Really the straight, tall lines of boles with their parachute tops, in a rapidly diminishing light, do produce a very novel impression—half rural, half architectural. One may fancy aisles and naves, transepts and choirs; the roofs, however, are real, made of leaves fourteen feet long, drooping like the mitres of a groin, and gothicizing a roof through which a few slender green rays penetrate—enough to reveal form without detail. But no marble gives sound to our footsteps; grass, poor a cow would say, but grass, for a carpet, and old cocoa-nuts to stumble over, bring us down to earth again. Here we are rewarded by some pretty flowers, which are the only beauties in this land of beauty who can wander “in maiden’s meditation, fancy free.” It is an effort to mount the Pisgah before us, but we must on to the very top, for our ankles are goaded by living spurs that lie lurking in the grass.

But we are spaciouly rewarded, for there lies Havana in its whole extent before us; the level line of sea behind it; the Morro guarding it; the Principe fort threatening it; the bay reflecting it and the setting sun gilding it; palms on every hand outline their greens against the intensely azure sky behind, and white walls glance out of the luxuriant foliage, proud that humanity has a home within them. Low-like mounds fill up the background like priests with shaven crowns, but all with beauteous vestments sweeping to their feet, running over the plains between them, up the adjacent ones, round the next—an interminable reticulation of life and loveliness. The embroidery on God’s footstool is here wrought with a lavish and loving hand.

Wonderful tropics! The normal home of man; the only soil and sun in which could grow the fair and fatal tree of knowledge or of life.

No sinister cold, no smoke-tarnished atmosphere, no death-bearing fogs, no fierce animal energy, no gross crimes; all is sunny and perpetual youth. Eden unquestionably was not more than twenty-three or thirty degrees from the equator. But the intermittent flash of the

light in the tower of the Morro startles every half minute the sudden nightfall, and we hasten to return, in love with nature, and reconciled to ourselves.

Monday, March 13th.—This morning came Mr. R—, bringing an unexpected armful of books, with which we are to equip ourselves for a visit to the country, where we are making arrangements to go. Commenced the morning by chess, in which I am now habitually ruined, and ended, as usual, by a long conversation, in which I am listener-in-chief, an interested if not a brilliant or eloquent one.

Mr. R— is a Romanist, but I learn from him more of the corruption of the clergy of the island than an uninitiated Protestant or Romanist either could invent. Priests in the country are badly salaried, often unable to get enough to pay their cooking and washing. So they become entangled in a peculiar kind of reciprocity with some negress or quadroon, who in time comes to live openly with them, and is recognized, and not unfrequently respected and acknowledged socially, as the mother of their large families. I find residents here indignant at visitors who come and skip over the surface of the country, necessarily, if they write at all, as superficial as false and absurd. Madame —'s book is said to be a tissue of falsehoods, as well as that of D—, which I had supposed photographic. Every one, in fact, but Humboldt, has assumed a knowledge to hide ignorance. Cuba seems to be the least abused because least investigated country which has got into books.

Mr. R— accepted our invitation to dinner. Like all Frenchmen, he prefers claret to other wines, and, like all old men who wish to live long, eats nothing.

Thursday, 15th.—Who can wonder that sailors never tire of seeing the sea. With what a loyal instinct the old retired captain seeks the shelter of some wave-worn cliff where the familiar spray may kiss his weather-beaten cheek, and the cry of the deep be the lullaby of his last sleep. Primeval forests want light; prairies are "stale and flat" if not "unprofitable;" mountain ranges, those petrified waves of earth, are groups of individuals: but ocean is one, an adequate expression of extent illimitable, of bulk immeasurable, of depth unfathomable, of force irresistible, of life everlasting. It is the eternity of time. But here in Cuba, where so much is transitory and fugitive, where the accumulation of wealth to expend elsewhere is the aim of all, the æsthetic claims of the sea are unregarded. The backs of the houses are universally turned towards it. The Cubans smother palaces in narrow streets, rejecting the air which has learned purity and inspiration from the sea, for siroccos of dust and heat. Ugly wharves abound, so do

batteries to make might right. It is only in refinement without degeneracy, in taste without tinsel, in wealth without avarice, that you find the loving adornment of ocean's shores.

We rode, while thinking and saying these things, to Chomero, a little bay with little cottages on its little sandy shore; little shrubs, little shells, and little life. A square fort guards it in sinister silence; a large railway station promises to turn the little Chomero into the large suburban Carmelo, and straight streets, straight avenues, and right angles threaten to make it as ugly as the tasteless plans of architects could devise.

But deliciously sweet is the air; deliciously sweet the new old story of the sea, and deliciously sweet the mareschino with which we flavor our aqua pura. All things return to their original starting point. Existence is a rounding of circles. The sun, a tired prodigal, returns to the parent arms of the horizon; like Socrates, his last act is to bathe, which he does in the returning tide, and he returns to el Hotel de la Reina, there to chat with Father, C—— or play with Señor R——, or, better still, to lounge on the sofas and fan our tropical thoughts into tropical dreams.

Saturday, 17th.—At last our days are come to have a family resemblance. I must even confess to a kind of monotony, a stereotypedness, in their lineaments. I grow to look upon all these extravagant novelties with sang froid, to ride through the streets reclining in my volante with rarely being amused, and never startled, that Spanish gentlemen sitting against the walls in rows, or standing at the corners in groups, one and all, smile and bow, as if I were an old friend. I am not a bit shocked to see negro and Creole and Spanish little boys standing in the doors or running about at play with more backs than shirts—in short, as innocent of clothing as their great-greatest-grandpapa was when, overtaken by that unfortunate after-dinner nap, and the angel performed the delicate surgical operation of taking the still crooked rib from his side, and was not obliged to waken him by unbuttoning his jacket. I can promenade the balcony of our hotel without any uncomfortable nervousness because all the upper and under clerks in the store opposite collect at once to gape and criticize and express in some way the admiration a Cuban gentleman is conscientiously bound to feel whenever he sees a wonder. I can see the lottery venders thrust their tickets into my hand at the corner of every street when going to church, in all public places and most private ones, without one puritanical spasm. I am obliged to find Sunday turned into a general holiday without thinking an earthquake is coming to-morrow, and to hear the ship's bell and car's whistle mingling with the church bell without expecting a consequent and immediate steam-boiler explosion. I have even ceased wondering at this eternity of

sunshine, and find it is silly to keep expecting blindness from its piercing light. I forgot to inquire why it cannot scald these deliciously cool breezes, or why these strong airs, always blowing upon the sunshine, as if it were a great plateful of hot gumbo soup, cannot manage to cool it.

If it be true that many microscopic beings which are vegetables in the shade become ripened into animals in the sun, then what happens to animals that live in the sun as much as we do? what are we to ripen to? Angels naturally—but sadly sunburnt.

This evening, my first acquaintance with a Creole, and one who is not only willing, but proud, to own it. He speaks English hesitatingly and solves a difficult riddle—it is possible for a Creole countenance to express, not only intellectuality, but genius, even spirituality. How polite are these people! Being an amateur artist, he invited me to-morrow to his studio; offered at once to contribute to my portefolio, and to lend any pictures I may choose to copy while on the island. Conversation turning upon the famous cascarilla, a powder made of eggshells, and universally used on the skin by these ladies to make black white, all the gentlemen, strange to say, advocated its use. Upon this I expressed an intention of getting some immediately and using it liberally. Señor at once replied, “Oh, I shall be only too happy to send it to you!” and sure enough, after he left, a beautifully ornamented box of the ornament, found itself on my dressing-table.

You must never express a particular admiration for any thing one of these people possesses, or he will at once present it to you, from his plantation to his pipe; and the latter is the surer test of his politeness. The other day I asked Mr. R—— where I could find a bookstore keeping some little views of Havana. The same evening came a great book containing all I wished, beautifully executed. Last evening on the Cortena, he took out a little microscope to examine some parasitic flowers I had gathered from the walls of the Cathedral (all the old walls of buildings are covered with such plants). I could not help exclaiming at the great power and convenience of the little instrument, when, what should come this morning but Mr. R—— with a bright new microscope in his hand, begging I would do him the favor to accept it!

With all our interest in this Creole, I could not help a sensation of relief, when he rose to bid us good-night. It is so difficult talking with a foreigner who can only comprehend your simplest words, which express your simplest ideas. You feel like a child talking to a child, knowing all the time that you are without the innocence or beauty of children. And this repression of thought, instead of repressing the voice, gives one an unconquerable instinct to raise it to its highest

pitch. One seems to think that an immense quantity of sound will hide an immense lack of sense; that they do not understand because they do not hear; that one is not so dumb as they are deaf.

Sunday, March 18th.—For the first time the heat is oppressive, enervating. We did not even summon courage for the early mass, the only religious service in a city which can boast one distinguishing peculiarity—it practises as much as it preaches, for it almost never preaches at all. What is better than the Cortina when you talk of fresh airs, and fresh shade, and fresh silence? So for the Cortina we set out, stopping by the way at the Cathedral. Here we find half a dozen sincere-looking devotees kneeling in different parts of the quaint, cool, serene temple; humble their birth, no doubt, as well as posture, for they kneel upon the bare marble, with no mat and no appearance of discomfort. When prayers are said and crossing done, they depart, silent and unnoticed as they enter; and we, with only the gratification of curiosity where worship should be, do the same.

Arrived at the promenade, we find an insinuating mist and an unusual event, a south wind, legitimatizing all this languor. Everybody in Havana pouts when the wind hails from the equator, and shivers when it comes out of a temperate zone. Both changes are so slight that a Northerner, accustomed as he is to the fiercely rapid changes at home, observes nothing different from usual. The ordinary wind here, which baffles all the scorching proclivities of this sunshine; which comes fresh and unworn over the salt and laboring seas; which makes this island an Eden of never-failing green,—this strong and pure, and gentle, as all that is strong should be, angel of mercy, is always an east wind. I am glad that I came to Havana to learn that the sole errand of an east wind in the world is not to manufacture influenzas, consumptions, gout-twinges, blue devils, and growlery-mongers.

To-night a long conversation with Father C—— who has just returned from an expedition to the interior for the purpose of collecting contributions for “me chur-r-r-ry” in Ireland. We talked of the Eucharist, of confessions, of indulgences, of rites and popes; in half an hour I learned more of Romanism from a Romanist’s point of view, than in a liberal share of twenty-eight years of my former life. He confessed that the corruptions of the church forced on the Reformation. I am sure the wary priest rather more than half expected to convert me, and I amused myself down in my sleeve at his amiable hallucination, while at the same time I reflected how surely the fogs of prejudice and sectarianism clear away before the inevitably advancing sun of knowledge.

IV.

Departing Guests—The Varieties—On Board, but not Gone—No Chimneys—Dog-Pails—Horses' Tails—Tall Negroes—Ecclesiastical Torch-light Procession—Watchmen—Leaving Havana—In the Country—Stopped—Seeking a Breakfast—A Cuban Village—A Primitive Well—A Peculiar Palm—Guinness—Our Quarters Therein.

Monday, March 19th.

ONE by one, our guests have left the hotel. The swarthy Portuguese gentleman whose acquaintance we made on shipboard, and who told us so much of the interiors of Asia and Africa, where he has spent much time. I am meditating the purchase of a camel to take home with me, to ride for health and pleasure. Think of the panic of the unsophisticated people of E—— at seeing a genuine live dromedary, philosophically promenading their streets with the valley on his back populated by your rejoicing and philosophical humble servant. Soon after this departure went the handsome and villainous-looking Russian, whom we suspect to have been a serf, because he told B—— one evening a long story of his feats and difficulties on leaving Russia without a passport. He has travelled all over the world, but in intellect will perpetually live, and irremediably die, a serf. The young, honest-eyed Scotchman, too, who played operas for me all one morning with so much skill and amiability, who has had his throat ventilated by three bullets in three battles, and is travelling—not consequently—for health, is gone to New Orleans. The diamond-labelled widow from Boston, worth an undoubted million, is gone to Matanzas, accompanied by her much-smiling daughter, and the daughter's blue-nosed governess. The latter should always be seen with the ears, for she talked well. The gentleman with consumption is gone from the adjoining room, so that my nights are no longer made hideous by his sepulchral cough. He goes to the south of France—so expect his wife and daughter—I expect to an ocean grave. Also is departed the dandy from New York, having, like the beast in Daniel's vision, a mouth speaking great things, but differing from that other biblical beast, the Israelites' calf, in that the ancient calf was made of ornaments, while this modern one only wears them. The aldermanic Englishman, with ruddy wife, are gone like a comfort from the other end of the table, leaving us to their roast beef and ale. The pretty school-girl and incipient belle from Baltimore, has relieved the parlor atmosphere of the perfumery of her beaux, and the piano of gymnastic or belligerent manipulations extraordinary, but not, alas! unheard of. Indeed, we are left almost alone, for mine hostess declares she is losing money at four dollars per day in gold. Cannot afford it; disinclines any longer to endure the imposition of servants and shopmen—retires to the United States in disgust. Meanwhile the chamber-maid, having taken a fancy to me, opens for my use the large parlor in front of my bedroom, where I receive friends and reign

supreme in a room spacious and lofty enough for a church, and retaining all the odor of sanctity left in it by the Bishop.

This evening we are to pack our trunks, to put on travelling attire, to say good-by to our friends, to fee the servants who have served us, and to take a volante for the steamer to Matanzas; but to say we leave here to-night for Matanzas, would be a choice and especial piece of presumption. I will tell you why. Last Saturday evening, we rehearsed all the above-mentioned performance. Our Havanese friends came to say adieus. Mr. P—— so full of regrets and kind speeches. Mr. M—— sitting by the parlor table, so long writing letters of introduction, that we did not ask for, to his friends in Matanzas, and then hurrying down to see that the state-rooms we had secured in the morning were all right, and to introduce us to the captain. Mr. R—— accepted B——'s invitation to take a seat in my volante. These public volantes never hold more than two, and consequently, B—— paid for his amiability by walking. Nothing doubting, we arrived at the steaming steamer; luggage is unfastened in great haste; we quickly alight, when, forsooth, the steamer does not particularly go to-night, not indeed until Monday next. The wind, it is said, took it in its head this morning to blow a suggestion breath for an hour; a prophetic flash of lightning was supposed to have been seen about four o'clock. Every body takes it as a matter of course, and I am obliged to smother my vexation behind an appearance of amiability.

A few more novelties, before going, I must bequeathe to you and to my memory, putting them in the hands of paper and ink for my safe keeping—then we will have done for the present with Havana. Did you ever think of one curious result of being really a city of the sun, viz., it is a city without chimneys. All the box stoves, and air-tight stoves, and best parlor ditto, were cast, if at all, in the foundry of Jupiter; all the steam and hot-air furnaces, instead of being interred in the cellars, are placed in the topmost garret of all garrets; the great vanity of inventions and ornaments in the shape of fireplaces, grates with their artistic devices, their pretty screens and shades, and the glowing faces and toasting feet before them. All these are snugly built in an architectural niche not made with hands, while their fires are kindled and formed not by the lungs of bellowses, but by the early-rising wings of enterprising angels. Ever since making this discovery I feel quite philosophically inclined to regard the fact that every man, or at any rate every man and a half you meet, carries his household fire about with him, using a cigar for fuel, and his devoted nose for a chimney.

Last night, while passing some highly respectable shops, we saw a pail of water standing in the door of each. B—— said, "Can you guess what those are for?" Of course I could not. He replied, "The law commands

them to be provided in every house at certain seasons, so that all dogs may drink when they wish, and thus diminish the danger of hydrophobia.”

It is not less curious that horses’ tails are braided by law, a fine following each omission. For aught I know, the law dictates the number of strands in the braid; that it must be done by a governmental barber, greased as if it were human, and always tied, as it is, to the left side of the saddle. This hen-hussy government also directs at what precise age children must cease to be models for statues and become the victims of tailors and dress-makers.

I wonder nobody seems to have observed how remarkably tall the larger number of these negroes are. The women particularly are not only tall and erect, but magnificent in outline, having an eye to which their dresses are exceedingly low in the neck and short in the sleeves. They are absolutely statuesque. The Spanish and Creole ladies look dumpish, I might say dwarfish, beside them.

But the drawback upon all goings forward, the voluminous reiteration of feminine folkling, must be performed; and we must again test the frailty of tropical locomotive veracity and steamboat protestations.

Tuesday, 20th.—We simply didn’t go last night because the steamer didn’t; reason not yet transpired. I am becoming so used to these failures of plans and probabilities, that I think nothing would disappoint me now, but a want of disappointment. However, I was not sorry that this last detention gave me an opportunity to witness a very interesting spectacle. A torchlight procession of priests and friars and mourners and friends, to say mass over a dying person. We were first drawn to the balcony by the incessant singing of a peculiarly toned bell, and then we saw them slowly and solemnly marching far below us, down the dark and narrow street, heralded by the strange bell in the hands of one of the novices, and going with devout faith in its absolute efficacy to shrive a human soul—its last earthly help in its last earthly extremity. The effect was much like that of the Misericordia in the cities of Italy, except that you miss here the quaintness and impressiveness of the black or white dominos. I did not care for the superstition; I only felt a profound awe, a solemn sense of mystery and fitness; I only marvelled that people can ever scorn or ridicule any faith that is sincere in heart.

At half-past ten we retired, just as the watchman was commencing his round of duty. Few things are more novel to us than this. The curious whistle is a kind of prelude to the monotonous tone with which he, every half-hour, slowly pacing up and down, lantern and spear in hand,

announces the hour of the night and the state of the weather. He keeps a sharp lookout on the weather as well as other vagrants, and clearly feels a responsibility in the matter. I have learned all the words he uses to tell us that the moon is shining, or clouds are obscuring it; if it is cold enough to encourage an extra blanket, or if a norther or sérocco is getting the upper hand of things; which hour is giving up the ghost, or which is like a soul "rolling from out the vast." But I can never comprehend what he says, the words are so drawled and twisted to suit the tune, which my English ears understand to be musical and not unsuited to a lullaby, and at the same time so many other watchmen in neighboring streets are mingling their echoes and refrains.

Guiness, Wednesday, March 21st.—At last! With the earliest dawning of the dawn we found ourselves actually leaving Havana, and that not by the boat, which it had become our turn to disappoint. How tired the watchmen looked as we passed them! lantern lights burnt out, long ancient looking spears carried listlessly by their sides, the guardianship of the weather left in the hands of the coming Apollo. The busy markets are already open; shopmen unfastening shutters; life beginning to awake and throb through the great body of Havana. Its soul, whether great or small, is scarcely yet awakened into any circulation through the channels of art or literature. The bells are ringing, drums beating, and guns firing, for it is five o'clock. The day is up betimes. The morning and evening here are the first day, and every day. Noon is but a shorter panting, gilded, interluding night, when all sleep who can, and all long for sleep who cannot. But the carriage stops in the midst of an articulating human mass. How it hurries and bustles! how many faces it has, and every one a different variety of brown or a new invention in the shades of black.

Presently the gentlemen come with tickets, separate ones for baggage and passage, and obtained with much difficulty and circumlocution, as the rule is that baggage must be sent the night before—which ours was not. No sooner are we settled in the cool cane seats than—will you believe it?—a whistle, the modern screech of a steam-whistle, is heard, and we start precisely punctual to the minute. Therefore, I assert, and will maintain that it is conceivable, it is not contrary to all the laws of nature, it is possible for a promise to be kept this side the Tropic of Cancer. But how am I to become reconciled to all this comfort and speed, this steam-engine, this trail insinuating itself so complacently through these celestial plains, snorting and blowing and smoking through these orange-groves, past these waving royal palms, in the midst of sights and sounds such as lulled Eve into slumber upon the bridal night of her birth! O insatiate Yankeedom! with all the lurid sins you have to answer for, will not this alone secure you a life lease in Purgatory? But I have no time for unpatriotic indignation. Fields of

belligerent looking pineapples; orchards of bananas twenty feet high, with immense leaves all torn into rags by the wind; groves of coconuts that look like sentimental palms in delicate health, with the green clustered fruit hanging round their necks like an affectionate necklace; cacti, the prickly pear growing fifteen feet high, and fences of the kinds I have cultivated in pots with so much care; vegetables, familiar and unfamiliar, for the Havana market; everywhere trees of gayest plumage, the blossoms so large and brilliant, that you grow incredulous and wonder if your eyes are not become telescopic. As you approach the interior, immense corn-fields greet you with their sweetened breath, looking like corn-fields of the Southern States grown delicate and pale from close confinement, a thickened growth that excludes the air.

At nine o'clock the train stops at a village named Bejucal. But for some reason it does not start again. B—— inquires to find we are to remain three hours—some failure in the engine. So we do what nobody else does, walk half a mile under our umbrellas to examine the town and get a breakfast. See if you do not think this a droll sight for American eyes. A village containing over a thousand inhabitants, every house in it, except the church, of one high story, roofed with large red earthen tiles, built of stone covered with clay or plaster, and painted in all possible colors that are bright. Not a pane of glass visible, all the immense windows being only grated and then filled with idle, staring women and naked children. Every house opens directly upon the sidewalk; and in the whole extent of streets, gardens, and courtyards, here in this land of miraculous vegetation, not a tree to be seen. But I have no eyes or curiosity left. I am one huge unreconciled appetite.

We stop at a house with larger rooms, larger windows, and larger basements than the rest; where rows of breakfast-tables, each with a caster in the centre and a tall black wine-bottle on either side, promise a drop, possibly a mouthful, of comfort to the perishing inner woman. But the tablecloths! Even my great hunger hasn't stomach for them all, overlaid and underlaid as they are

"With food-prints that perhaps another,
Sitting o'er their various stain,
A forlorn and famished sister
Seeing still might eat again."

Not so I. Consequently a private room is ordered with a breakfast in it, and while preparing to fill up the vacuum, not of the within, we sally out for a reconnoitre. Just at the back door, we stumble upon—you do not guess?—a veritable theatre,—boxes, galleries, pit, stage with decorations for scenes, painted curtains, trap-door opening upon the prompter's den, and niches properly placed for footlights. But the

boxes are only stalls with rough board partitions, the seats are wooden benches, the galleries are an upper loft still retaining remnants of former hay, the floor is of mother earth unmodified by pavement or broom, and in fact we have every evidence that this temple is devoted to horses and oxen by day, and to the muse of the histrionic art by night. But this aching void which nature has the good sense to abhor! "Will breakfast never be ready? It is eleven o'clock! I wish I hadn't seen the tablecloths." Ah, here comes an agile quadron announcing it in Spanish, which does not get itself translated. We go to a little bedroom from which a cot has been hastily ejected, and sit down to a table loaded with fresh fruits of great variety and abundance, in addition to the usual bountiful breakfast of the country, and, best of all, clean linen under them. You are right: we revel, we luxuriate, and to this hour I sit and think of that breakfast with a gastronomic satisfaction none the less because we paid five dollars for it. We are now ready for any adventure at the disposal of the remaining hour, and set out for the ruins of an old castle said to have been built by the Marquis de San Phillippi and honored by the presence of King Ferdinand VII. at a ball, while he was incognito in this country. Now the walls are crumbling to dust; one or two window-shutters flap disconsolately in the wind, parasitic plants grow over the mouldering arches where a dead past sleeps its sleeps and dreams its dreams.

The church, Moorish in architecture, is just across the Plaza, and invites, but the sun threatens, and we decide for a tempting grove near the railway station.

As we walk over the very clean pavement, stared at by wondering groups of villagers, a woman rushes up to us breathlessly explaining that she knows where the English person who lives here is to be found, and will be very willing to show us the way.

Mr. S—— thanks her, with the assurance that we are only waiting for the train; and we soon find ourselves reclining beatifically under deliciously breathing trees, whose shadows are thick as night with darkness.

I must not forget to mention a primitive kind of well we saw when again en route. It was like an ordinary well: an old white horse walking away from it when the bucket was full and backing to it after it was emptied into the cask on the cart, and must go down for more.

We came also for the first time upon a peculiar species of palm, distinguishable from the royal palm only by an enormous swelling half way up the trunk. I pronounced them dropsical. B—— was more brilliant, declaring they resembled a snake, that had fallen into the

misfortune of swallowing a toad,—an idea which Mr. S—— developed in a drawing which I copied and am saving to show you. Very many of these singular trees grow crookedly—vegetable leaning towers suggesting the idea that a variation from the perpendicular may be peculiarly incident to trees as well as tropical towers and morality.

It is an interesting fact that instead of undressing with the indelicate precipitancy of our trees at home, the palm-tree drops only one leaf every lunar month,—a replenishing of its wardrobe which is dignified as well as rhythmical.

On the subject of palms I find authors in Cuba again inaccurate. It is asserted that they are of no use, when it is true that of all the several hundreds of varieties found on the island every one is useful. A gentleman who has lived here in the country many years says, “They are the most useful tree we have.” They give food to animals, thatches to roofs, brooms to housemaids, cords to tobacconists, hats to men, besides being used for numerous other purposes.

The young palm often reminds one of an overgrown aquatic weed; very many resemble a gigantic pencil-case, the trunk quite straight and equal until you approach the top, where it suddenly diminishes, looking loose as if it would shove up and down like the pencil point.

Arrived at Guiness, the volante does not come as we expected from the plantation where we are invited to spend a week or more. We go—not to a fonda, for they are usually only miserably dirty inns, but to a private boarding-house, with which Mr. S—— is already acquainted. Here we find what we have so much desired—a characteristic Cuban house with characteristic Creole customs, although our landlord is a fat, good-natured Frenchman, and his wife a tall, stately, imposing negress. Her history is a little interesting. A sister of hers had a daughter, whose father was a wealthy Spaniard, and who sent her to Paris to be educated. Soon after she died, leaving this aunt \$10,000, with which she purchased her freedom, and, I conjecture, the French husband.

As we enter the door, large enough for a camel, she greeted us with a hospitable smile and graceful bow, at the same time motioning us to sit in the row of rocking-chairs standing accurately in front of the huge window. I am told that unlike ordinary parallel lines these have been known to absolutely meet. If I do not mistake, the occasion is apt to be when an appreciative señor finds a pretty Creole for a vis-à-vis.

The house is a fac-simile of nearly all these houses. Massive stone, directly upon the street. It is of one high story; tiles keep out the heat;

the pointed roof and bare rafters inside giving a bare-like effect, which the brick-paved floor tries to counteract, and the enormous doorways to maintain.

A curtain with curious embroidery at the bottom conceals this door which separates this sala from my chamber. There I find plenty of finest linen and the clean odor which should always sanctify bedrooms. Canvas stretchers across the cot-like bedsteads make a delightfully cool and clean mattress. Carefully embroidered pillow-cases endeavor to excite our admiration, and brightly colored pictures of saints and martyrs on the wall, our devotion.

At three comes a Spanish jumble of sounds which mean, "Dinner is ready." We walk out on a back piazza, overlooking the pretty courtyard with its shrubs and flowers, while we are sheltered from the sun by thickly-growing and blossoming vines.

Our chairs are a curious kind of wooden frame covered with some sort of hairy skin stretched tightly across the back and bottom; our floor is of clean cement; our soup is colored a bright yellow with saffron; our fish is fresh and white from the Carribean Sea; our rice is pearls set in sweet oil; our green peas have lost their identity by the same process; our water—unlike the quality of mercy—is strained, and through a filter; while our beef, like all the beef we have found in Cuba, is suspiciously dark and tough. Yet we have faith, remembering that the colored bipeds are much higher in the market than the quadrupeds. In addition to all this, our table is loaded with nondescript dishes of Creole names and ingenuity, and all are ranged in one stiff row down the middle of the table. Opposite me sits a Creole gentleman who has not only belonged to the army (it has been asserted that Creoles are not permitted to enter the army in any capacity), but has been an officer in Spain. We strike up a conversation in French, and imagine my admiration for the flexibility of his politeness, when he inquires how long I lived in Paris. Between dessert and coffee he leaves the table to smoke, apologizing to Mr. S—— by saying he is so much of a Spaniard that he must smoke before taking coffee, and he does not like to do it at the table in the presence of an American lady.

I confess it made me feel a little peculiar to see our French landlord sitting complacently at the head of the table with his bona-fide negro wife standing as complacently behind his chair to serve us.

After dinner I am attracted to the water-filter standing in one corner. It is a large moss-covered porous stone, with a cavity in the top where the water and charcoal are placed; the water creeping through the stone drop by drop, into the vessel below. I wish I could remember the

name of the island where it is found, and, indeed, of which it is the foundation.

V.

A Palm-grove—A Planter's Household—Coolies as compared with Negroes—Anecdotes of Coolies—Robbers—Heterogeneous Dinner—Creole Politeness.

Thursday, March 22d.

THIS morning comes intelligence that death has occurred in the family of the owner of the plantation and that his sister is become insane. Our visit there is necessarily abandoned. However, we are not uncomfortable in our present quarters, and its independence reconciles us to the disappointment; for you must know a Cuban planter would as soon think of taking pay for the air and sunshine you breathe in his house as for any amount of board, lodging, or attendance he might give you.

To-day, we discovered an inviting grove of palms just outside the town, and, unwisely careless of the threatenings of the sun, set out to find them. They looked very near, over the tops of the houses, and so tall that, like vegetable Mother Gooses, they seemed to be "sweeping the cobwebs from the sky," but, as we walk on, seem to recede farther and farther. The sun waxes and waxes; our fatigue becomes exhaustion; but we find, as did Macbeth, that to return is as difficult as to go on; so on we go—melt—utterly dissolve—until, at last, we reach a lovely garden, and with permission from the major domo, drop down upon the roots of a tree in the midst of many of the best fruit and ornamental trees of the country. Was there ever shade so profound, perfumes so delicious, orange-trees so dark-leaved and bright-fruited!

The ground around us is covered with a great variety of fallen fruits of which we do not even know the names. They are left quite at the mercy of various fat, black, lazy, meandering pigs that at first look to you like overgrown rats—for, like all the hogs of Cuba, they are entirely without bristles, as smooth-shaven as if just from the razor of the barber.

Presently, we discover a little house behind the trees, apparently unoccupied. The same idea occurs to us all at once—if we could get it to live in while we remain. We go for the major-domo, who conducts us inside. Rude enough, indeed, for the most rural or romantic tastes, and with eight great black—so black that you could not see them—negroes sitting in the middle of the middle room. They are all dressed in spots; that is, a few rags still cling, by chance, or by preternatural adhesion,

to different parts of the body; and all are busily filling some sort of a demijohn with a kind of black bran much grown and used here. Not too inviting, certainly, neither, is the stifling, annihilating walk before us, in a sun whose furnace is heated seven times hotter than before. We survive, I could never tell how, to find that the dinner at home has scarcely survived an hour's waiting for us, and I go to rest till soup and fish are over.

Immediately after dinner, a Chinaman rides up to the door, leading three horses. A friend of Mr. S——, a sugar planter, hearing of our arrival, sends the horses, with an invitation for us to visit his estate. So soon as habited, I select the horse that wears the side-saddle. He starts off at once in the delightful and peculiar gait of Creole horses,—not an ornamental one, as I somewhere said before, but well suited to the climate, perhaps a result of it,—an amble, giving exhilarating exercise, without fatigue.

The plantation is but a league distant, and very soon the tall white chimneys and low roofs reveal our saccharine destination. Flocks of decently dressed and moderately happy-faced negroes and coolies are at work in the corn-fields. As we pass on an odor as of nice sweet cake while in the progress of baking greets us from the boiling sugar, with a savory familiarity; then a glimpse through the trees of blue walls and red tiles suggests the family mansion.

What can be so fresh and peaceful as that pretty, low, rambling house, nestled in among the greenery, with the huge trees behind it giving that background so indispensable to beauty in houses, while on all sides stranger varieties of trees, flowers, and shrubs breathe upon us the sweetness of their welcome!

Our hostess, a charming lady from the United States, living here twenty years, meets us on the piazza with a graceful hospitality. The gentlemen go to the sugar-house or ingenio, which yields an income of from seventy-five to a hundred thousand per year, with two hundred and fifty negroes and coolies to perform the work. I am taken into the grounds and gardens by Mrs. D—— and her son; where among all that is new I find a great variety of cactuses, many twenty or thirty feet high; ripe oranges, perfectly green in color; mignonette and allspice trees; tall trees of blooming oleanders; also cape jasmines and the night-blooming cereus.

We talk much of the coolie system. Although less amiable than negroes, Mrs. D—— prefers them on account of their superior activity, ingenuity, and intelligence. Nearly all of them can read and write, and have some proficiency in arithmetic and geography. Beside being very

passionate, they consider their persons sacred: many of them would die rather than endure any bodily chastisement. Several murders have occurred on this plantation among them, but we learned on the way home that Mr. D—— had the matter hushed up in some way to save their lives and his money. To illustrate the character of these antipodes of ours: A celestial in Havana, supposing himself detected in a theft, confessed his guilt to the unsuspecting owner of the property, also a Chinaman, who at once tied his hands behind his back and commenced leading him through the streets backward. The authorities stopped this, to the great indignation of the persecutor, because he could not do as people always did in his own country. But the companions of the thief all deserted him, refused to eat, sleep, or speak with him, not on account of his guilt, but of the bodily degradation he had suffered, and the next morning in despair he went and hanged himself. Mr. R—— told me of a cook of his (they make the best cooks in the world) who was attacked by a disease for which the doctor, fearing it to be infectious, sent him to the hospital. While there he was attended by the noble Sisters of Charity, of whose unselfish though sometimes mistaken devotion I hear so much. When he was cured one of the nuns said to Mr. R——, “Do take care of him, for he is a good Christian; and as he desired it, we have baptized him.” Afterwards his master, knowing so well the tenaciousness of the idolatry of the Chinese, said to him, “How come it that you were baptized?”—“Oh,” said the fellow, “my head was very hot, and I thought I would let them put a little water on to cool it.” This was being Cooley!

A little event has just occurred on our plantation, from which I am wandering. One of the laborers, a Chinaman, it is suspected (because the negroes are such cowards), threw into one of the wheels of the machinery an iron bolt of some sort to prevent its operation, and so give them all a holiday. The master, not being able to discover the offender, forced them all to work harder than ever through the week, and all the following Sunday.

But night is coming on and we must go in spite of urgent invitations to remain, and many expressed regrets from our kind hostess that her house is already too full of visitors to admit us permanently, and so, promising to “Come soon and spend the day,” we encounter the darkness, and I many misgivings of possible robbers. And why should I not? The country, from all accounts is full of them. Everybody goes armed. Not one man do you meet, from the elegant señor down to the stupidest negro, without pistols in his saddle and a long sword at his side, which I always see brushing against the hedges as they ride in the country, or rattling on the pavement as they walk in town.

My fears are somewhat quieted by the assurance that nobody accompanied by a lady has ever been attacked or in all probability will be, an assurance more interesting than convincing, it must be confessed. However, somewhat armed and strengthened by my weakness, we ride through the bristling hedges and star-lighted air until tremor is forgotten in the sweet enchantment of the scene, and we are sorry to see the lights of Guinness rising one by one out of the darkness.

Friday, March 23d.—These people have unquestionably the most heterogeneous tastes in the world. At dinner to-day I counted ten dishes entirely new to me,—all but two, intricate complications of flesh, fish, or fowl, but mostly of vegetables, compounds which no ingenuity of chemist could hope to resolve back to their elements. How think you, is unsophisticated American digestion to make terms with this marked array? How not to disappoint the attentive hostess who expects you to encounter them all unflinchingly, and end them, not yourself, victoriously?

During dinner we happened to mention our intention of procuring horses and riding twice a day in search of adventures and an appetite, when what does a polite Creole opposite do but offer me the use of his own horse as long as I stay: it is in Matanzas and he will be only too happy to send for it.

I found my French useful to decline and to express thanks more ample than the Spanish “gracias.”

VI.

“Nice pretty House in the Country”—Wrong Side of the Horse—Discovery in Mental Photography—Visit to the Country House—Not to be obtained—Contrast of Palms and Bamboos—The Youth of Tropical Nature—A Remarkable Phenomenon—House of the Marquise of V——“Le Armistad”—Burial of an Officer’s Child—A Shock——“Cafetal”—“La Providencia”—A Sugar Plantation—The “Royal Highway”—A Grand View.

THIS evening comes Mr. S—— from Father P——, full of a nice pretty house we are to get in the country. Immediately a horse resembling an overgrown rat is procured, warranted amiable with ladies, and we prepare for investigation.

Imagine my dismay when about to mount, to find the side-saddle turned to the right of the horse instead of the left. It is indeed the ordinary style of this extraordinary country. I remember seeing ladies in long, white habits, riding in this way in the suburbs of Havana, quite at ease, and unsuspecting of the droll figure they were making. I have, however, seen or been told that ladies in the south of Europe are taught both modes of riding, still, I am not inclined to try a new horse in a new manner; so, after a change of saddles, we find ourselves sailing off in the stereotyped gait of the Cuban horse, than which nothing can be more safe, or less calculated for the display of horsemanship. The scene is exquisite; we could ask no change in "the day, the place, the hour, the sunshine and the shade," except that one might excuse the low, red afternoon sun from peering up so inquisitively as it does under one's eyelids.

How dense and massive are these great cactus hedges on either side of the road! and how their fierceness is softened or masked by thick vines creeping and penetrating everywhere, with blossoms and perfumes in their hands!

My equestrian experiences continually reimpres upon me a discovery I am making in the philosophy of mental photography of scenery.

Riding towards the east is far more inspiriting than going towards the west. Travelling to the south is equally more cheering than to the north. I find that western views, however intrinsically beautiful, have in them an accent of sadness, of departure, of farewells. It is there that the sun, and moon, and stars go down to be buried, leaving behind them a consciousness that all bright and fair and tender things must also drop into a night of death.

Eastern views, on the contrary, however rude and desolate, are yet seen and beautified through an atmosphere of hope. A sweet sense of promise always comes up from under the orient; there is an inherent life and light in it that no stalking shades can terrify.

Northern views, though outwardly full of grace and beauty, have always about them a haunting desolation. You think only of those "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice," with no heart beating under the ribs, no blood in the veins, no kindling in the fixed eye. You fall into shivering reveries about the unbending attitude of those hyperborean scenes, wondering if it is their backbone, the north pole that keeps them there forever, so stiff and stark. You see those ice fields inhabited mostly by the longing looks, the gasping yearnings of lost souls who are condemned to burn forever in flames that do not purify or consume.

But southern views, though they may be insipid or uncouth in material form and feature, are always sweet with the very soul of passion and poetry. They cry out for you in advance to all sorrow and hopelessness and death,—

“Avaunt thy miscreated front.”

But the low roofs and bright walls of the house we are seeking have discovered us through the trees.

We enter the long, straight avenue of palms interspersed with laden orange-trees, and are met at the door, not by simply the mayoral, as we had expected, but by the son of the proprietor who, contrary to our information, lives here with his family.

We are shown to the sala, the living and dining-room combined. Here sits the pretty, pale mistress sewing on little dresses, while her child of two years totters up to meet us, three large fourths of her comfortable little brown delicious form visible.

Our errand is of course baffled, but we sit talking until the host invites us to visit the grounds. They are large, cultivated with great care and watered by a kind of inundation. Numbers of exotic fruits are shown us among others, well grown American apples, which it has been said, like peaches, will not grow in the tropics. Think of apples nearly ripe in the month of March!

After having made our adieus we turn our horses' heads towards the wild, primitive-looking forest across the plantation. Directly we find a serpentine path through the dark, rich, reddish-brown soil, the only soil in which oranges and many other tropical fruits will grow; which stains the men's feet who work in it, or shoes if they have them; browns the oxen, carts, everything that it touches; and which is grateful as “music after howling,” to sun-dazzled eyes.

I have not before been so much impressed by the exquisite contrast of palms and bamboo-trees growing together. The strange, sombre palm, with its erect, uncompromising trunk, its long, straight, dark leaves, looking so doric, so rich in individuality, and then, nestled quite under its very shadow, you often see a clump of the slender willowy, delicate bamboo, its pale green leaves, so soft and fine and feathery. It is the vegetable masculine and feminine attraction. Or it is not unlikely that a stern warrior, and an ethereal post would be drawn together by the same contrasts.

As the path narrows and the forest thickens, these dull things are

obscured by densely woven vines, which everywhere hover over these trees, making the forests at times so dense, that it must be a very small bird or breeze to get through them: as for a man, he might as well attempt to wedge his way into the future before the present has cut a way for him.

But we do not care to have night shading these shadows with her black crayons, and so, at the first opening, turn our horses' heads, and amble homeward, beneath the thrillings of those great ardent hearts up in the blue bosom of the sky; those stars so large and fair that we need no astronomer to suggest that it is only distance which keeps them from being suns.

Saturday, 24th.—When we had drunk the delicious coffee and milk, or, more accurately, milk and coffee, which our landlady brings so soon as we are awake, or should be, we hurried off for the early ride.

What can be more fresh and innocent, more externally young, than this tropical nature! She is a robust Titaness, it is true, but always out of her strong comes forth sweetness, and no riddle either. How readily she justifies the taste which decks her in these early mornings with all her jewels! And then she is so tender, so peaceful, so serene. Her tears, thank heaven, like those of infants, are not tears of sorrow. Her tempests, tornadoes, and straits of passion have been studiously kept from us. It is true one misses that "sense of promise everywhere" with which our Northern springs console their sweet virgin hearts, for nature is always here in her fruition of beauty; "her every future is already in her every present." "The world," says Plato (and he knows), "is God's epistle to mankind." Here the manuscript is written in a large, generous hand; the ink flowed freely; the thoughts are largely outlined.

Even the people, in spite of numerous reports of robberies, have almost universally an innocent and amiable expression of countenance and the most unoffending, respectful way in the world. Even the horses, I am constantly assured, are never vicious. A lady might ride at random any of the native species with safety. It may be that an habitual and contented indolence is largely among the causes, but it strikes me that harmlessness is the most apparent characteristic of these children of the sun.

I must have forgotten to tell you of a remarkable phenomenon which we met every morning coming in to market from the country, or already arrived when we leave. It moves like an animal; its physiognomy is that of a vegetable. The first thing you see advancing upon you is a huge heap of corn-stalks, called fodder, I think, at home, and mollacca here. It is very high above, and trails upon the ground

below. By careful examination, you may discover at one end of it a muzzled appearance resembling a horse's head; from the other extremity dangles a possible appendage you would declare to be his tail, while sometimes, by careful scanning and difficult investigation, you may count four feet under the thing, upon which it seems to move. Sometimes, eight or ten of these mysterious apparitions are fastened in a procession by a rope, pace slowly along with one negro to drive or conduct it, often sitting astride on the top of this superstructure. After many investigations, I venture to affirm that the framework of this architecture is actually a horse buried, yet alive and doing well. It would also have amused you to see the great sun-umbrellas nearly all these countrymen carry on horseback; not of the dark orthodox colors, but a bright light red alternated with blue or yellow, tipped with black, or purple bordered with green: an attempt to eclipse the sun in more ways than one.

After breakfast we with our umbrellas walked over to accept the invitation of Father M—— to see his garden, or rather the garden in the courtyard of the Marquis of V——, in whose vacant house the priest lives alone and free of expense. Finding that he had not yet returned from morning mass, we took the liberty of avoiding the scorching sun of the garden by rambling through the great deserted corridors, chambers, and antechambers, all built and furnished in Spanish style and only occupied, like most of the great houses out of the cities, one or two months of every year. Presently, after I had duly ensconced myself to rest in one corner of a sofa behind the door of the grand drawing-room, came in the priest, jolly as the priests of romance, saluting us with a stunning volley of Spanish and politeness; we replying in smiles and nods which Mr. S—— did not translate, and in English, which he did. The reverend father is a short man even for a Creole, and when sitting suggests the form of a pyramid; but the little twinkling gray eyes situated near the apex of the structure suggested anything rather than the sepulchral. After we had seen and duly admired some of the frescoes in the rooms and all the distant views from different upper piazzas and windows, the priest, with the air of one who is doing you an uncommon favor, invited us to visit his sanctum. I put on a look of becoming gravity and awe, and, with a feeling of profound grief at my ignorance of the mysteries of science, and, alas! of art and theology, and with profound gratification that there are some works, even in Cuba, where science and wisdom find refuge, where learning and piety shake hands, I follow the father and the gentlemen follow me.

We enter a dark, long passage leading to this cell of midnight vigils and occult research; the door slowly opens, I reverently enter upon—heaps of tinsel leaves and flowers, with scissors and glue and all the

paraphernalia for flower-making; piles of bouquets lie on the bed, all with silver leaves exactly alike, and each one with a brick-red rose in the centre. They are to decorate the church on Easter Sunday; they are the only proofs of piety and science and lore that the sanctum of our jolly priest possesses.

After dinner, Father M—— came in, bringing a gentleman who said we could have a house of his in the country. We go at once on our horses, to find a river of remarkably clear and pure water running behind the house among the trees, all most inviting; but the house is wretchedly dilapidated, kitchen to be built, and, withal, a Creole overseer is to occupy one half of it. Thus nonplussed, we resign all thought of a permanent location in the country, and decide to spend our time in travelling over the island so soon as the interest of Guinness is exhausted.

From this place we ride to Le Armistad, the ingenio of Mr. D——, our first Guinness friend, with the hope of getting some guirappa or cane-juice to drink. It is said to have remarkable fattening as well as curative power. But the machinery is silent, the chimneys are smokeless, the odor of nice sweet cake only regales the nostrils of the memory; and so, redisappointed, we turn again toward home, and ride through the hedges by the light of a Venus that has a halo as distinct as you may have seen around the moon. Instead of fast horsemen with dangling sword and pistol-equipped saddle, we only meet sleepy-looking market-men returning home astride the collapsed panniers, which in the morning bulged at each side of their horses like huge saddle-bags, stuffed with all kinds of fruits or poultry, and these poor horses would think themselves fortunate if fruits and ducks and chickens were all that is packed upon their devoted backs. Not only all the fodder and charcoal go to town in this way, but I saw this morning four exhausted-looking creatures wilting along through the mid-day sun with chairs, tables, and bedsteads, piled high upon their backs, and sometimes a good-for-nothing-looking negro mounted on the top of all openly rejoicing in that “bad eminence.”

Sunday, March 25th.—Awoke too late and too weary for early mass this morning. Immediately after breakfast I was attracted to the window by martial music and a procession. The landlady came in, saying it was the burial of an officer's child. First came the musicians, mulattoes with handsome serious faces; after them boys in the dress of novices, then the priests in robes. But no relatives or mourners were to be seen, for the immediate friends of the dead never go to the burial, do not leave their houses on these occasions. It is not considered decent or appropriate anywhere on the island. One is constantly impressed with the truth that geographical nearness has little to do with real nearness.

All the customs of this country ally it much more nearly to Europe than to America.

I stood looking carelessly on at the long procession, with only curiosity excited, when I am attracted by the peculiarly sad and solemn and tender expression in the faces of the soldiers who follow. I see tearful eyes turned toward the centre of the group. I look—what an apparition! Never shall I forget the shock, the thrill, the agony of the sight. Upon an open litter carried in the hands of these soldiers it lay, the little angel face of rarest possible loveliness, wreathed with flowers that are pale and fair, but not so fair and pale as itself. The little dead hands full of white flowers are raised and clasped in a supplicating attitude, the little heavenly form, just the fatal and familiar size, is robed in a trailing white satin shroud, and over this unearthly vision shines the burning sun with mocking glare, and upon it stare the passers-by with indifferent faces through which no broken heart has ever looked. But with this wonderful image some mother's soul at home is blackened, with this wonderful image the blackness of the grave will be brightened. Ah, that grave! It will hold another dead infant upon its heart, but it will give back none in return!

March 26th.—Again this morning from bed to horse for a little free air, a little hour to enjoy this wonderfully sweet and delicious nature before the sun begins his reign of tyranny, and, to all who have the temerity to encounter his personal presence, reign of terror.

Among untried points of the compass, we remember due south as one. Here we very soon find ourselves and the road entering upon a long avenue formed by hedges that have grown to trees, often meeting over our heads. These are filled with birds and flowers of all songs and perfumes; through them we catch glimpses of scattered cocoa-nut groves and wide cane-fields.

Presently we come upon a high, ornamented, close-locked gate, the first of the kind we have seen, and as unlike a sketch I made of it as a pretty gate must almost be to a bad drawing of it. On approaching more nearly we find written upon it "Cafetal." We look over the side fence and discover a wide avenue of palms leading to the concealed house, and on both sides the pretty coffee-plant, with its small, dark-green leaves. All over the wide fields it is growing under the shade of a great variety of trees,—the cocoa-nut, orange, palm etc.; for you must know the coffee-plant has the feminine peculiarity of always needing shelter and protection, as well as of causing palpitations, exhilarations, trepidations, and nervousness generally.

What a shame and sin it was to turn all these shady, poetical cafetals

into horrid ingenios with their treeless, monotonous, endless fields of cane, their dreary smoking chimneys, their steaming engines, and broiling machinery of men and women!

In the perpetual battles between gold and beauty, it is likely, I fear, the latter will not win until it has the millennium for an ally.

As we were turning away from the closed gate, a huge piece of midnight, bungled into human shape, and dressed, or rather undressed, so as to display the herculean proportions of the entire morning and evening of his body, having the noon in eclipse, came up to us, holding out an immense charcoal paw, accompanied by a beseeching jumble of chopped Spanish.

B—— put in it a piece of silver, which the black-meat looked at so contemptuously as to quite spoil his attempt at a civil “gracias.”

Evening.—We ventured to penetrate the inviting avenue of this morning; found it leads to the beautiful Cafetal of “La Providencia.” The grounds lovely, with overgrown ornamental trees and shrubs, and pretty brook of rural and domestic habits. Just beyond we met the administrator with his wife and sister, returning on horseback from the “south side.” where we had much wished to extend our own ride. The pros why we should go are:—this is just the season for the sea-cow; they are being caught in large numbers, and I am positively assured by those who should know, that they are the real original mermaid—the prosaic suggestion of all the romantic ballads and traditions. But the cons that confront our enthusiasm are mostly the roads, which are so bad as to be dangerous; the horses we met had been almost buried in the mud, and it is a severe test of the strength of the most vigorous person. So we yield to the urgencies of that wretched bugbear, invalidism, and, finally, to the invitation of the party, to go back with them to the house. Here we are urged to remain to dinner, which is waiting in the large living-room where we sit, but the sun is already set, and we excuse ourselves, accepting at last some fruit and a glass of guirappa.

By the time we have passed the grounds night is lapping over the edge of day without any perceptible clasp of twilight. And those hedges so high and thickly woven! The starlight scarcely contrives to get through them. How easily an army of robbers might conceal there and rush upon us, unarmed as we are, and the darkness robbing us of our only protection—my sex, and its weakness and appeal to gallantry. Our horses even instinctively press close to each other and quicken their pace. But the darkness, or the invisible hand and heart that fashion it, protects us safely home. Here we are just in time for the usual evening

music on the plaza, a pretty square in the heart of the little town, made and ornamented by concha, with much taste and expense. It is like all the plazas I have seen, an imitation of the one at Havana; with exactly four palm-trees, with shrubs and flowers and statues; with small bilious-looking men, and belles with regular oriental features, soft and dark eyes, fat forms, pretty ball dresses, and an awkward mode of progression which they fancy is walking.

Tuesday, 27th.—To-day we explored our way to a new sugar plantation, the first I have seen where the cane is ground by oxen instead of the usual steam-engine. I have always pitied those poor oxen and horses pacing round and round in the mill, round and round with the rounding months and years; but these wretched beings who drive them, with long whips or rather poles in their hands, calling out to the long train of animals at every step, as they follow them, in hideous monotonous, guttural tones that never end; fifty in number, all young and mostly females; night and day, day and night; and several overseers with the invariable long whip in hand to watch at every step,—it made me heart-sick, and glad enough to turn from the entrance of the building, where we sat on our horses, and ride up to the house of the mayoral for a glass of water. His wife, with an interesting Creole face and Spanish tongue, insists that we dismount, which accordingly we do, and wait while the slip-shod negress (negresses here are always slip-shod) goes to the sugar-house for guirappa. We learn that the plantation belongs to Marquise Somebody, who only comes once in two or three years, occupying the family house across the green, which, though ample and well built, has not a tree, a shrub, a leaf to turn it into a home. As we wait, a small chain-gang passes by us, coolies and negroes linked together at their work; not an uncommon appendage to a plantation, and in fact essential with coolies, who are quite certain to commit suicide if whipped. The lady tells me by proxy that she much prefers negroes to coolies because they are so much more amiable.

This being the reverse of opinions frequently expressed to me, I infer that the preference indicates the character of the employer quite as much as that of the servants.

We return home with the eight o'clock morning sun applying itself with the vigor and precision of a hot flatiron to the back of our necks. Here we cool off and rest ourselves for the substantialest of breakfasts, only to be surpassed by the substantialest of appetites.

As a daily increasing strength allows a daily increase of circuit in our excursions, we this evening ventured toward the attractive range of mountains stretched across the northern horizon. Our course soon led us upon the "Royal Highway," a broad, smooth military road leading to

Havana; presently we turned upon a wandering equestrian path, with the appearance of once having been the rough bed of some mountain stream. And this is not improbable, for the entire luxuriously fertile plain of Guiness is watered by streams born and matured here; their course and the amount of water each plantation shall receive being regulated by the government.

The water for the towns we see carried in little casks, upon the backs of the horses.

The soil on those barren heights being too sterile for the luxurious tastes of the sugar-cane, Indian corn, vegetables for the markets, and many unfamiliar plants are cultivated by the simple, contented-looking Creoles, whom we find living in these little scattered cottages, with their high-pointed thatched roofs, few or no windows, and multitudinous appendages of goats and children.

Arrived at the top of one mountain, we find another still towering above us, evidently commanding the northern view, so nothing remains but to pick our way across the valley and its hill, and inquire the best path of the wondering mountaineers. As we go on the squalidness increases; the soil becomes more stony and obdurate; the whole aspect of the country, with the exception of here and there a stray palm, Mr. S—— tells us, is precisely like that of the poorer parts of Ireland.

At one point we come across oxen toiling up a hill with an immense hogshead of water, upon a real Yankee sled; at another we meet a dashing horseman, who reins up to salute us. Mr. S—— praises his horse, when he replies, with a bow full of native grace, "It is always at the service of your worship."

But here we are at last, upon the very pinnacle of this temple, beholding the kingdoms of Cuba and the glory thereof.

East and west of us mountains—those pyramids of nature, which will never, like those of man, forget their maker—are rising and falling to suit their own ideas of grace and majesty; north and south are stretched fair and smiling plains and valleys, with all their strong contrasts and harmonious blendings of colors: the horizon on the south is caressed by the soft, sunny, sky-blue waters of the Carribean Sea, looking like the beginning of a new firmament; the northern horizon is washed by the darker and wilder waves of the Atlantic; and over all is poured, in bewildering floods, the glory and passion of a tropical sunset.

VII.

It Rains—The Effect—No Miserere—Guirappa-seeking—A Skeleton Horse—B——’s Pantomimes—A Day More—The Bells of Guinness—Market Day—An Invitation—Another Plantation—A Remarkable Tree—Palm-Sunday—A Sundayless World—Dreamland—I Didn’t Smoke—Cushioned Heads.

Wednesday, 28th.

EVER since our arrival in Cuba, nature has kept in her after-dinner mood; but to-day, for the first time, clouds are come over the sky with another motive than that of simple ornament. If every cloud is an angel’s face, and no angel’s faces elsewhere, then are we not blessed with angelic physiognomies? For the first time these gauzy waves have ceased to vagabondize over our heads like mere apparitions of loveliness that cannot discover or remember their own errands in the world. In short, the rain has poured in torrents, in desperate cataracts, for two hours. Every thing, as well as the roses, is “dripping and drowned.” The streets are rushing rivers.

But I do not see that nature is especially glad, or even conscious of the change, unless it be in sympathy with our gladness; for it is here that she seems always to have within her, and in the atmosphere she breathes, a fountain of perpetual freshness and youth.

So many weeks of heat and drouth at home would calcine everything to ashes; but now we see all vegetation bright as when it was born. Nature is here a goddess of immortal youth sipping invisible nectar and ambrosia, and forever ministering to her favorites from the secret of her reservoirs.

So the rain having made us domestic, I sit behind the grates of the swelling window, mending gloves, sewing on buttons (they foresaw the rain), listening to ludicrous passages from Handy Andy, taking lessons in cribbage, studying Spanish verbs, and watching the enraptured little boys sailing miniature boats in the street; or the stately negresses passing by with the rain dripping from umbrellas upon their bare shoulders; or the omnipresent soldiers hurrying along to get out of the rain and give me a glimpse of the irresistibly comical cut of their semi-skirted coats. I do not know how better to describe these coats than that they always remind me of the pathetic condition of those redoubtable three blind mice after

“They all ran after the farmer’s wife,
And she cut off their tails with the carving knife.”

This evening we mustered courage, India-rubbers, and umbrellas, and went to the cathedral to hear the Miserere. This being Holy Week, it was to be chanted every night. But the rain, that could not keep away curiosity, had quenched the fire of devotion. No one else came, and we wandered about in the silent aisles listening to no music but the echoings of our own voices through the high arches, and our footsteps over the marble floor. We saw by the dim light of the wax tapers, only vague outlines of statues and pictures draped in black crape for the sadness of the Passion-week.

Presently, through the deepening darkness, we saw emerge the black-robed figures of two pale, melancholy-looking young priests, moving about like spectres in the chancel, arranging images and ornaments, and, though unconscious of our presence, always kneeling and making the sign of the cross when passing the image of the Virgin.

Thursday, March 29th.—Again guirappa-seeking at the plantation, for our morning cordial. Young Mr. D——, who brought it, poured out the great pitcher nearly full that was left upon the ground. I exclaimed at his wastefulness, when he replied that it is free as water. The negroes and dogs all drink what they choose, and invariably grow fat in sugar time. Seeing close by a great black heap resembling a coal-pit, I inquired its nature. He said it was the animal charcoal with which the sugar is discolored; that it comes only from Europe and nothing else can take its place. Thus the greatest whiteness and purity is obtained only by means of the blackest substance, as the whitest souls have grown fair through the darkest suffering, and sometimes, it may be, sin.

Directly a Chinese servant came from the house with the incomparable coffee and milk always used to pacify Cuban hunger until the late breakfast hour arrives. We swallowed their coffee, and they our thanks, with an equal appearance of pleasure.

In bowing ourselves away from the shadow of the building, where our horses had been standing, we turned upon a curious spectacle,—one of those skeleton horses that one so often sees moving mechanically about here under their enormous burdens. The horses pass for living, but I have more than once inclined to the supposition that it is the galvanic life which may be given to animals after death. As I was saying, one of these posthumous nags was slowly coming up the road, with a comfortable-visaged tin-pedlar mounted astride the roof of the edifice of which the horse was the basement, and between the two, and branching out each side of them, a huge pannier, plethoric with all

the paraphernalia appertaining to a tin-pedlar. Over the top were dangling strings of tin basins and baking pans; long-handled dippers were hitting the poor animal's ears at every step he took; and as he turned up to the house of one of the under overseers, I saw the man pull out from unknown depths wooden spoons, sticks of tape, molasses candy, yards of calico, china dolls, and tin boxes of shoe-blackening.

Mr. S—— is gone to Havana, and we are left quite at the mercy of our French, and the little Spanish we manage to extract from the grammar and dictionary. Nobody but our host understands a word of French, and in his absence you can imagine our mute helplessness. If anybody were to come in at that open door and ask permission to cut my throat, I should hardly be able to decline the civility or to express any opinion of my own on the subject. B——, however, as you know, is admirably ingenious in pantomime, so when we wish any thing I stand in the door, repeating by rote words I have just picked out of the dictionary, while he is stationed near talking with nose, eyes, hands, and feet, by way of explanation; as you remember, in the infancy of the drama among the Greeks, one performer stood out in the front of the stage repeating the words while the actors in the background gesticulated the play in pantomime. All this, as you may imagine, is infinitely amusing to the always-present retinue of staring servants (there are at least two and a baby to every guest). These darkeys take great pride in my success in making my wants known, by using the hissing whistling “ps-s-s-s-t,” with the tongue between the teeth, which always and everywhere answers in place of bells to call servants, and which I can do like a native.

I had nearly forgotten to mention a little incident that occurred the day of our arrival, and has since been frequently repeated. Dinner had just gone out, and we were sitting enjoying our exclusive knowledge of the English language, which makes us almost as much isolated as if we had the luxury of a separate table and house, and keeps the curiosity of the rest of the company in an absolutely abnormal condition of activity,—thus we were sitting and talking while waiting for the supplement, the amen to our dinner, viz., the cup of *café noir* (and, mind you, this word *noir* is by no means figurative: this after-dinner coffee is so black and opaque that if an elephant were in the bottom of the cup you could not see him). Well, as was I trying to say, we were sitting waiting and talking, when an unaccustomed noise was heard upon the brick pavement of the parlor; we looked, and lo! what should we see walking majestically through the parlor, through the doors, through our piazza, dining-room, through the walk of the courtyard, but the very fine, well-kept American horse of Monsieur, mine host. B—— and I were of course sufficiently amused, and the rest of the company sufficiently astonished at our amusement: the only novelty to them

was that the horse came alone, without the volante.

Friday, March 30th.—This morning, as every morning, I was not awakened by the bells and clocks of Guinness; though, for the matter of a capacity to rupture sleep, they might have been invented by all the imps of discord. You can no more comprehend than you can describe them. It would be interesting to know where can have been found metal so base to produce sounds so execrable that “sweet bells jangled out of tune” would be heavenly harmony compared with them. You would suppose they been tuned by an earthquake. If I had to manage to endure them, I should see to it and have my hours longer, or farther apart. But yet, as I said, it was not the “braying, horrible discord” of the bells that sent Queen Mab off in a hysteric fit; it was, alas! the earlier five o’clock sounds of washings and scrubblings in the next rooms. Such scourings and pourings and dashings of walls and floors, and of all supposable things, were surely never heard out of Holland, where, Leigh Hunt tells us, the women wash everything but the water.

Much as I doat on cleanliness, I find it a poor exchange to pay for it in the more precious commodity of sleep, and I record myself to you as a wretched victim to this diurnal deluge of neatness.

On our way to the ingenio I mustered Spanish enough to beg a cane-stalk of the negresses who were cutting it down with great rapidity in the fields, using huge sharp knives that I could scarcely lift. They eagerly gave us more than we could carry, enough to keep us sucking all the way home, and a six weeks to come. Willis says, “Nobody can starve here: the cane-fields are all open; and if hungry, one has only to cut a stick and suck.” We discovered this morning still another sugar plantation, but distrusting the availability of our Spanish, only rode past the sugar-house without asking for guirappa. As we passed a gate near which groups of women were at work, one of them came up with outstretched hand, begging countenance, and some sort of a jumble, and all the rest started to follow her example; but being purseless, and with no great mind to use a purse if I had had it, I shook my head and said, “No hablo Espagnol,” emphasizing the remark by a decided application of my horsewhip to the horse.

Saturday, 31st.—This evening we promised ourselves another visit to our mountain, but an unusual amount of heat and exhaustion forbade the ascent, and very soon found me reclining under the irresistible shadow of trees that knew how to make shade, while B—— galloped off to reconnoitre. But I soon found myself comparing myself to Gulliver when he became populated with Liliputians, so many insects shared in my taste for shade and solitude; and I was glad enough when B——

made his perspiring appearance.

This being market-day, we found great amusement in watching the peasants astride their panniers which bestrode the horses. In addition to being stuffed monstrously with vegetables, over the edge of most of the panniers were dangling chickens, ducks, and Guinea-hens, tied together by their feet, feathers ruffled, wings flapping backwards, heads dangling downwards, and an expression on their faces of pious resignation adapted to the study of bigger bipeds. All the poor things were alive, but one was sure must die of vertigo or apoplexy, before they could by any possibility reach the town. Here we noticed particularly the tethering of the horses and cattle, a custom indispensable in a country where there are no fences and rarely hedges. One end of the rope being tied around the animal's neck, the other is fastened to a tree or shrub or stake driven in the ground, or sometimes to the long, strong grass. Thus localized, they are allowed food and exercise to the full capacity of the rope, but no farther. Each one is made a hermit, ruminating round and round in his solitude and his circle, which, instead of increasing, is sure to diminish, for the rope gets tangled in knots, or twisted around sticks, or the animal's own legs, so that prudence soon forces a sedentary life upon him. Not unfrequently these ropes were lying in ambush across our path, often so hidden by the grass that neither ourselves nor our horses discovered them until we were nearly caught in the snare. Imagine the interesting frights and ingenious summersaults that we escaped!

I must not forget a remarkable tree we discovered across the fields, which attracted so much our fancy that we immediately turned off, overleaping hedges and ditches (small ones) to examine it. Its outward proportions were on the most magnificent scale, eclipsing in size all its neighbors and all the trees we have before seen, but the trunk proved to be nearly or quite hollow. B—— rode in through the gothic opening, turned his horse around inside, and came out again, and I might have done the same thing at the same time. It would make a dwelling absolutely larger than some of the inhabited huts I have seen here. That admirable disciplinarian, the old woman who lived in her shoe, etc., would here have found “ample room and verge enough” for all her surplus of light infantry, while those who had to go to bed without molasses or bread could have amused themselves with the echoes of their own squallings, for the cavity sounded hollow, like a great unfurnished room. But at the time I only thought how much the tree resembled those magnificent lives spreading out so fair and grandly, reaching so near their kindred blue that in the eyes of the world they are fulfilling all of a high and happy destiny. You must approach very near, perhaps penetrate the abysses of their being, to find that the great heart is gone; its place is only supplied by hollow echoes and

aching void.

April 1st.—Palm Sunday—like all the other Cuban Sundays, except that two, or at most three, men have passed on horseback, with long palm branches in their hands.

A south wind again, more enervating than can well be imagined by those who have never felt it come hot and hissing from the equator. It is an incipient sirocco, and always sends the Italians to bed. Of course, too languid for the early, and only mass, coming as it does, before breakfast: the rest of the day we have only to endure with the aid of a fan, and to watch the altitudes of the thermometer.

I have not yet recovered from the uncomfortable sensation of living in a Sundayless world,—a world which being so elaborate in its upholstery, is supposed to have required the full seven days to complete it, leaving no rest or hallowing for anybody.

You can well understand that writing to you, or anybody, on these hot but heavenly days, is simply a contrivance for inking over my dulness. As you suspect, I am getting to live quietly here, dreaming away life, without much help of books, it is true, but, what is better still, without much hindrance from them either.

After all, why not take a little time to dream a few little dreams in this large dream of life? Death will come soon enough to tap us on the forehead, or it may be to shake us rudely, and then we shall be wide awake, and for a long time. Besides, if it takes a long time to dream one's dreams, it takes as long time to undream them; and you know—who does not?—that they are a kind of atmosphere which penetrates where everything is as much as where everything is not.

I also assure you that pen and ink have no natural, or so far as I am concerned, acquired relations with these transcendent tropical nights we are having now; nights when you can feel this wonderful moonlight, creeping in its slippers of silence, over all the longing darkness, through all the sleeping lids of this softly breathing nature, sprinkling them all the time with its white juice-of-love-in-idleness. Sometimes, you lie its willing and helpless victim, until all your unpastured emotions come to be swayed by it, as by a shepherd's voice. Again you can think of it only as growing, growing, more and more, wider and deeper, all over the world, like a blanched and intangible parasite, which no morning will ever dare with profane fingers to pull up by the roots.

Tuesday, April 3d.—Yesterday we remembered the invitation of the

major domo of the sugar plantation, where oxen instead of steam get the saccharineness out of sugar-cane, as we do out of babies—by squeezing. The consequence was that the rough Creole saw the sun and us dawning upon him at the same distinguished moment; that we dismounted to be conducted over the establishment; that the trampling feet of oxen, the monotonous and endless cries of their female drivers, rang in my ears as repulsively as they did at first, and still keep doing, in spite of all my efforts to banish them; that we stood beside the boiling cauldron, where two withered old men were stationed to skim off the scum, and remind one of the witches in Macbeth bent over their cauldron to catch the scum, the “Bubble, bubble, Toil and trouble” of human destiny. While I stood looking at this strange scene, our conductor, with great empressement, drew from his pocket two fine cigars, offering one to me, and the other to B——, and was sorely chagrined and puzzled that I declined it. I was obliged to resort to the plea of invalidism to pacify him. From this we went to the refining house, where little inverted tin pyramids, full of sugar, were setting all over the floors, with thick layers of black clay spread over their heads, and little tubs, to catch the molasses, set under the opening in their feet. This apartment opened into the one for drying in which these little vessels had been emptied; the whitened sugar lay evenly all over the floor, and a fat negress walked over it with a rake in her hand, and the shoes she was born in on her feet.

I noticed here, as often before, deep scars on the women’s necks, cheeks, and arms, frightfully disfiguring, and painfully suggestive, but I was relieved to find it is only the effects of their favorite custom of tattooing. I thought before, that nature and the most servile of drudgery had carried the ugliness of these poor wretches to the extremest verge of possibility, but I find that, in that “deep,” as well as in all others, there is still a “lower deep.”

We were also puzzled to divine the import of immense round cushions fastened securely upon nearly all the women’s heads, but soon discovered they were to make a comfortable seat for the immense burdens of sugar going from one house to another; for all the ordinary burdens we had before seen, carried on the head (negroes here have no idea that their heads were made for any other use) had been simply with the aid and comfort of the woolly padding of nature.

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VIII.

Dear old Mr. R—— — Chess and Whist and Life—Good Friday—A Religious Procession—The silence of the Town—The Miserere—To Matanzas—Company in the Cave—Father M——’s approach to Matanzas—The Bay—Valley of the Yumuri—The Plaza—The Dominica—The Ensor House—Easter Sunday—The Paseo—Steamer to Havana—A Night on board—“Queen’s Hotel”—Tricks on a Travelling Author—Theft on the Almanac.

Thursday, April 5th.

YESTERDAY the train brought dear old Mr. R—— to see us. In addition to our former chess and conversations on literature and art, he reads French, gives me lessons in Spanish, and occupies all the time that would otherwise have made this a bigger if not a wiser or a better letter.

I have often suggested to you the resemblance between the game of chess and the game of life. It occurs to me at this moment, that, if this be true, fatalism must also be true. These inhabitants of chessdom are forced about by an inevitable will; their success and ruin are equally beyond their own let or hindrance. They are created as we are, with certain powers and spheres for action and being; with certain possibilities which, whether they will or not, may become impossibilities, but with, alas! impossibilities which must remain such.

From an inevitable force of circumstances, the great and powerful in chess may become weak; the insignificant may have a greatness thrust upon them. The humble pawn can at times act with the dignity of a queen; the queen is often less powerful than the little plebeian beside her. The bishops, in their attempts to serve royalty, often sacrifice themselves; the knights sometimes ruin the queen they are sworn to protect. The queen has the position many other women would like,—she is the only female in her empire. But, alas! this dizzying distinction sometimes spoils her wits: in trying to rule her allies and conquer her enemies, she is too apt to destroy herself and her kingdom. Her king and lord lives mostly in statu quo-ism. He would be her admiring imbecile except that he has found out the secret of endless life: “The king never dies.” He may at times, it is true, be a wandering Jew, but he is an immortal one; he can well afford to be besotted with inertia, for he is too wise to die. But this wisdom is also his fatality. All that he and his queen or subjects do or refrain from doing is foreordained; their entire existence seems to me an admirable illustration of the doctrine of predestination.

If, however, you wish to find an example of life as it is, of man as he is in these strugglings between the inevitable providence (which in this other game we call chance) and his own free will, between

circumstances and character, ability and materials, we must go to the game of whist. Here you are always balancing the must be with the may be; you are recalling the past, and from it foreseeing the future. You are calculating the chances, you are making desperate and uncertain ventures, which may result in disappointing success or brilliant failure. And here is life, this unfathomable life of ours; this wrestling with hidden and unprecedented elements, this combating an unguessed destiny; more than all, this yielding with an equal grace to its fondness or its hate. Here, as in life, honor is for the successful; but true greatness is for him who uses most wisely and most valiantly the much or the little that is given him.

Friday, 6th, has brought back Mr. S——, with intelligence that the steamer leaves for Nassau on the 14th inst. So we must be off at once to Matanzas, if at all; and Trinidad, and all other places must, alas! be given up, from the lateness of the season and the excess of heat.

This evening was celebrated by a grand religious procession, one of the ceremonies of Good Friday. At five o'clock, low, muffled sounds of music were heard approaching. Presently the band appeared, draped in mourning; following it, drawn by black horses, came a great hearse, with heavy pall and waving plumes, and on the top of this, under a white shroud, was plainly visible the sharp outline of a human figure; blood spots were on the edge of the shroud, and above them, drooping on one side, with matted and stained hair, lay the agonized, ghastly face, in wax, of the crucified Saviour. It was horrible!

I felt myself grow sick and faint, but looked around in vain for a corresponding horror in the faces of the other spectators. They stared on with only a little less than their usual gayety and indifference, and turned with curiosity, as I did for relief, to the remainder of the procession. Next came a line of priests in sable robes, and officers of government with crape on their arms, all with uncovered heads, and carrying in their hands immense wax candles that flickered and paled before the light of the receding sun. The procession paused a few minutes before each of the principal houses, while the dead march kept beating on. But now they have passed, and here comes an august, standing figure, mounted upon a high carriage: we soon discover it to be the Virgin following her son to the grave.

Her dress is of long, trailing black velvet; upon her head is a faded crown; the face is horribly wan and white, with an expression in it of excruciating torture and despair, and, alas! what is this carried, high in the pale, uplifted hand! We shudder, we are faint, we look again; it is—a deeply flounced, elegantly embroidered white pocket-handkerchief!

Behind all this follows an indiscriminate mass of men, women, and children; but I have seen enough, and go back to the house, wondering over the strange things in heaven and earth and our philosophies.

Mr. S—— tells us so much of the elaborate celebrations and ceremonies in Havana, during these Easter days, that we regret not having gone back to witness them. Yesterday, the streets in all parts of the city were filled by ladies walking to and from all the different churches; the great ambition and proof of piety being, to visit as many as possible during the day. All were dressed in deep black. This is the only day of the year when dainty Havanese female feet press the pavements. Not a sound was to be heard over the entire city. All shops closed, carriages and vehicles of all kinds forbidden to stir, as was the case in Guinness; profound silence reigns because Christ is dead, and no profane sound must disturb his slumbers. In most of the churches an image of the dead Christ lay in a tomb surrounded by burning tapers, and all the signs of burial. Even some of the private houses, opening as they do on the streets, discovered in the principal room, to passers by, the same ghostly image partly covered by a black pall, while the family and guests sit around it in deep mourning, which is, or should be, enlivened only by occasional sobs.

Friday evening, 10 o'clock.—We are just returned from the Cathedral. As we entered, the Miserere was being sung by two young priests and our friend Father M——; the organ accompaniment played by a young priest. The pathetic strains, here mournful as the sob of a broken heart, there subdued into the tones of resignation, then suddenly struggling out in an energy like despair, seemed to thrill all the hearts of the kneeling worshippers. They were composed entirely of black-robed women; for you must know, devotion here is entirely a feminine accomplishment: the men only stand around against the wall to admire the performer, apparently quite forgetting the performance.

I perceived on one side a regularly arranged pyramid of wax candles. At certain periods of the ceremony one of the lights was extinguished, then another and another; when all were out the services were to close; but finding my strength waning faster than the lights, I came home to make a hurried note of sounds and scenes that I do not attempt to describe, of ceremonies that have all the grotesqueness and absurdity of those of Rome without their dignity and grandeur. The piety of Cuba seems to think that the next best thing to being in Rome and doing as the Romans do, is to be out of Rome and do more than Romans do.

Saturday, April 7th.—At nine o'clock this morning we found ourselves waiting at the pretty and fanciful American depot for the Havana train.

As soon as fairly seated in the American car, in came our jolly friend the priest, accompanied by a large number of officers; we find that he is chaplain of the regiment. Officers have taken the little private sitting-room one always finds in these cars. They amuse themselves more than us by uproarious singing and laughter. As we start the priest crosses himself, laughing, and accompanying it by a muttered prayer; all we hear is "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He says this is so that if any accident happens it shall not be his fault. One of the sharply moustached officers is the first to get out his cigars and offer one to me, with a look of some concern that I decline, but all the rest of the ladies accept, and soon every man in the car, but one woman, is smoking and happy. But presently Father M—— discovers a pretty Creole lady acquaintance quietly smoking her cigar, at the other end of the car; he leaves me with a phrase characteristic of Spanish politeness,—“I kiss your feet, señora.”

Saturday.—San Nicola and the other little towns on our way present uniform features. In all varieties of new palms in groves and avenues; hogsheads of molasses waiting to get their tickets on the cars; low huts with thatched roofs, or else the ordinary Cuban house with nearly all its rooms opening on the street, exposing the occupants to the curiosity of travellers. These people seem to be as ignorant of private life as unconscious that they are leading a public one. How much is the privacy and sanctity of domestic life a matter of climate?

This being within a few days of the season of cock-fighting, these redoubtable warriors, tied securely by unwilling feet, were being carried in large numbers to the numerous fighting rendezvous. Their spurs were very long with which to “prick the sides” of their masters’ “intentions,” otherwise I saw nothing to distinguish them from our humble, domestic, barnyard citizen at home, who crows and struts out his day, and dies “unwept, unhonored,” etc.

The approach to Matanzas, through a ravine between two mountains, is far famed, and certainly deserves no small credit for the hasty glimpse it gives you of an ordinarily interesting town and an extraordinarily interesting bay, and beyond this an even range of mountains which surely were not born great, nor have they achieved greatness, although many travellers and descriptions have thrust greatness upon them.

I will not blacken and mar the myriad-hued brightness of that bay with ink; nor will I attempt to chronicle the phosphorescent miracles which are all day long being performed by the gulf stream and the concealed rocks over which it washes and breaks in sunny foam and dripping rainbows. It is so marvellously uttered in colors that words would do it

wrong.

Evening.—It being well established that the only sane thing to do upon our arrival was, soon as possible, to see the renowned valley of the Yumuri, we accordingly walked from the dinner-table into our waiting volante to go and see the renowned valley of the Yumuri.

We drove at once as far up the Cumbri mountain as is consistent with horse and carriage possibility, the rest of the way trusting to the unwillingness of feet that walk under the burden of an old fatigue and a new dinner.

Inversely, like Milton's pandemonium, above the highest peak, a higher peak still beckoned us up with false assurances, until at last this is really the very final topmost top, and we are distinctly rewarded for so much patience.

On one hand the heavy-walled, gaudily-painted city, with its tumultuous life, its busy human ascent of toil and gain and fashion; on another side the throbbing pulse of the bay, sometimes quickening to a fever like a poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling, and again stilling to an echo silent as a dream of silence; on another side still, interwinding hills and mountains clad in ample verdure, and pretty country seats; and here, on this side, lies the peaceful little mountain-ringed Yumuri valley. It is a tiny, but deep and choicely-inlaid casket. There are groves of dark palms; pale, pea green cane-fields interspersed with dark patches of the brown soil for contrast; little glancing quicksilver brooks; thatched cottages buried among flowers and trees, whence come happy voices of children; here a herd of cattle quietly grazing, there a solitary market-boy wending sleepily home on his sleepy horse,—and all this full to the brim, to the very mountain-ring of the faint, fading glance of a sun that is just breathing his last upon his bed on the western horizon.

And now, the thickening twilight is just able to reveal to us the path leading to our volante; the famous cave is far off and out of the question; and soon we are leaving nature and her spells behind; faster and faster we descend, until soon city lights and city sounds direct us to the Plaza. Here the band is playing and promenading, bare-headed ladies are enjoying the cool air and the warm admiration so grateful to us women in warm climates.

We leave our volante to join the gauzy, chattering stream, and suddenly stumble upon—none other than the gentlemanly Creole officer who was our table vis-à-vis at Guinness. Offering me his arm, the rest following, we walked round and round the flower-scented grounds,

listening to all the music that could insert itself between the pauses of our conversation. Very soon fatigue and faintness drive us in to the Dominica, a restaurant of which Matanzas is justly proud,—to my taste, with its cheerful frescoes, much more inviting than the one at Havana. Here we find ice-cream, frozen juice of pineapples and other fruits, orchata (almond juice), and a strip, a mere parallelogram of a breath of sponge-cake to eat with them. But I am too weary for any refreshment that can be found outside a pair of clean linen sheets. B—— hisses “ps-s-s-st” for a volante and directs the driver to go at once to the “Ensor House.”

Easter Sunday, April, 8th.—Just too late for the grand procession which celebrated this morning, glorious as all Easter mornings should be. We tried to reconcile ourselves by attending high mass at the Cathedral. Even here, at eight o'clock, the ceremonies were closing; we had only time to catch a glimpse of the gold-laced robes of the priest as he disappeared behind the chancel, and a hasty scrutiny of the perfect flower-bed of kneeling beauties covering the entire floor of the building. I was taken completely by storm. So much and so rare beauty concentrated in so little time and space! Every woman, old and young, was in full dress: white silk, with lace flounces, a long white lace veil thrown, like an exquisite fancy, over head and shoulders, instead of the usual black mantilla, was the most favorite and *recherché* costume.

Here in Matanzas is a decided sprinkling of the Anglo-Saxon blood, just enough to flush and brighten the skin and to remove two or three of the strata of fat, which are so universal with the white ladies of Havana. Many are even so delicate in coloring, that the winds of heaven must have considerably passed by them on the other side. Still the ladies of Matanzas almost invariably retain the classically regular features, the dark fascinating eyes, the grace of posture, the meaning movement, the language of the fan, the perfect busts and arms copied from a more luxurious Venus de Medici. I cannot indeed say how much of all this effect was owing to the contagious admiration of a circle of señors, who had also come to the sanctuary for worship, preferring however, in all good taste, truly to offer their devotions at the shrines of living virgins in flesh and blood and *moire antique*, to that of a dead one in tinsel and wax. Nor can I vouch for the effect of *cascarilla* artistically applied; for these ladies are all allowed amateurs in its use. I tried however, to forget all this—to enjoy by faith as well as by sight; and I did succeed in bringing away with me an impression of loveliness that would be an actual inheritance to an artist.

From the Cathedral we drove to the somewhat incipient Paseo. It is an unfinished sentence, yet prettily punctuated,—here by commas in the shape of vine-porched cottages, there by a long dash of green fields;

now a parenthesis made by brackets of palm-trees including a little bright piece of the bay, uttering itself in a low tone of voice; presently an exclamation point, made of mounted cannon; and finally a full architectural period at the end—the country house of Count Somebody, or possibly of the Austrian Ambassador.

I am not sorry that we leave by steamer to-night for Havana. Most travellers, I believe, prefer Matanzas; but to me it lacks the chief charm of its elder sister,—the quaintness and novelty, while I find little to supply their place. Undoubtedly it is far more modern in its spirit, and for a resident might have more social congeniality: but when you consider that the sights are all seen; the heat so terrific that the presentation of our letters of introduction becomes formidable; that there is little left for us but a questionable amalgamation of American and Spanish cookery, and unutterable suffocation in a room carefully constructed to admit all of the sun and none of the air,—will you not allow that in this instance a moderate, though possibly somewhat habitual desire for change is fairly legitimate?

Havana, April 9th.—The hour of nine o'clock last night, if it had not been totally blind with the darkness, would have seen us tumbling down from the shore to one of the little row-boats that serve you up to the waiting steamer for Havana. Learning that the cabins below were mere dens, we all remained on deck till the clocks on shore struck eleven, then twelve; then till the steamer began to manifest signs of life; then until

“The ship was cleared,
The harbor cleared,
Merrily we did drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top,”
and we began to plunge in darkness and the broad ocean; and then one little hour more for the moon to rise out of this black sepulchre like its guardian ghost; we wait for it to say its say of beauty, and to brighten the farewell we take of Mr. S——, who leaves in the morning before we are awake, and whose constant kindness has been beyond return.

Now at last we really go; and what think you is the way to the ladies' cabin? None other than directly through the gentlemen's saloon, where the occupants all lie in open berths, and in most ghostly states of attire. I catch one glimpse of horizontal whiteness, draw my veil, seize B——'s arm, eventuate at the farther end. Here numerous nasal ebullitions (why will nobody submit to calling the thing snoring, if he himself is the offender?

"All men think all men" snorers "but themselves")
are exchanged for intimations of equally fabulous sea-sickness, and I
find myself safely arrived in the ladies' cabin, where babies are
prevailing to a sleepless extent.

Here my mattress, sheets, counterpane, are utterly ignored or forsworn
in a cane-bottomed berth. Without any unpinning or unhooking delay, I
follow the example of the groups of shady-faced ladies around me, not
of Christabel when

"Her gentle limbs she did undress,
And lay down in her loveliness."

This morning, after a delightful slumber all the sweeter because
unexpected, I was awakened at daylight by a rattling of spoons, cups,
and saucers. It is my companions taking their cup of coffee,—that
inevitable potion without which you could never convince newly
awakened Cuban men and women of their personal identity, or of the
possibility of the world wagging one step farther.

We had already been lying an hour or more in the bay of Havana. Very
soon all the passengers are gone but ourselves; we, the only
foreigners, are left alone to wait the hour when a volante can be
obtained. B—— goes as fast as possible to secure rooms at the hotel.
One Chinese waiter offers me milkless coffee; another bushy-headed
antipode stands in the door, with pail and mop in hand, waiting for me
to go. At last, with patience in a precarious condition, I rush out on one
side of the vessel to get out of the way, and I am driven thence by the
observing disposition of a swarthy man lying in his berth in a little
vessel moored next to our own: he leans on his coatless elbow with an
air of cool curiosity that is unendurable. Then I go to the other side,
where dirty drippings from the upper deck, suggest anew the
superfluity of my presence and drive me, this time fluctuating on the
precincts of ill-temper, out to the gentlemen's cabin. Here I met B——
tired out with looking for a volante, and the disappointment of not
finding rooms at Mrs. A——'s where we hoped to go for a change.

At last, after a deal of English and Spanish nobody understands, and of
pantomimes that would have enlightened "blocks, and stones, and
worse," etc., we find ourselves re-established at Queen's Hotel, in a
room which, it is plain to see, if there were light enough in it to see
anything, was made for some uncompleted individual,—one in whom
had never been breathed the breath of life, or who had breathed it all
out again, with little hope of a second respiratory experiment.

Tuesday, April 10th.—Last night arrived a young Bostonian, who, like

ourselves, has been adventuring in the interior. He tells us he knows well the young man who gave a well-known author on Cuba all the facts in his book except the few the author learned personally. He says the person is a great practical joker, and plumes himself on the humbugging he achieved.

The day has passed in farewell sight-seeings and shoppings, the latter consisting mostly of the purchase of Spanish fans and linen dresses. And now I am ready to part from Cuba with scarcely a regret, yet carrying with me only fresh experiences and smiling memories. The sun in this social as well as material firmament has been cloudless, or with only rare veils to brighten its brightness.

I have, it may be, hung on the walls of my life some new pictures, which will help to keep it from the ravages of time, somewhat as the paintings of Protogenes saved the city of Rhodes from the destruction of its enemies.

I do not yet recover from the impression that I have committed a kind of theft upon nature, or the almanacs, or the thermometers—or all of them; for I have stolen and luxuriated in an extra summer; so that this twice-flowered year is likely to be for me the impendingly pious

“Next year after never,
When two Sundays come together”

IX.

A Discovery for the Benefit of Smugglers—The Steamer Karnak—Adieu, Cuba!—An English Ship—Nassau—The Negro Custom-officer—English Hotel—An Ex-President—What the Island is and has—The Negro Element—The “Eastern Road”—The Air—The Beau Monde—Turtle Houses.

April 11th.

LAST evening, after visits from nearly all our friends; after a long walk in search of Spanish books, to find them much dearer than in New York; after looking as a matter of curiosity at the diamonds which are so lavishly displayed in the shops, to find them all singularly yellow,—I retired to sleeplessness and suffocation in my air-tight room. I awoke this morning with only life enough left in me to rejoice in the prospect of the little sea-voyage before us.

At ten comes Mr. R—— to accompany us to the wharf, where we found

other friends awaiting us, with row-boat and swarthy boatman ready to carry us out to the steamer.

And here, as a conscientious narrator of important and dignified historical events, I have to record an item of experience, an unintentional experiment, that possibly may be of service to future female travellers.

So soon as our volante reached the landing, the custom-house officer appeared, received my keys, proceeded with official composure to examine the trunks. But the instant the top of the first was raised, up popped, most ferociously, in his face, a white skeleton—a hooped petticoat! At the last moment I discovered it lying on the top of the wardrobe in the hotel, and in great haste had stuffed it in the top of the trunk I was locking. As you may guess, a general shout of laughter followed from the watching bystanders and my friends, and I soon found my chagrin giving way before the irresistibly funny scene, and joined in the merriment. B—— took the thing, flourished it for my benefit, and crowded it back again. He then pointed to the other trunks, but the nonplussed officer solemnly shook his head, declaring himself quite satisfied. He expressed doubts about our being people likely to carry contraband articles. Hereafter, when you wish to smuggle cigars, linen, or guava jelly, you have only to cram an apparition of this sort—a jack-in-the-box—in the top of your trunk, and you are safe.

But here we are at the steamer. Our friends come on deck; we sit talking until the last moment arrives for setting sail; they descend the step-ladder to the little boat, and their waving handkerchiefs are soon lost among the shipping.

A pretty, fair-haired girl sits near me, whom, from her resemblance to the captain, I perceive to be his daughter. Presently she asks me to go to the other end of the ship to see the anchor drawn up—always a cheerful sight when fifteen or twenty ruddy Englishmen march regularly round and round at the work, while the pleasant roundelay all sing directs their movements.

And now “the last link is broken which binds me to” this happy clime; we float down through the winding bay; past ships of all nations; past our favorite Cortina; the Punto; the Morro, that was the first to welcome and is the last to leave us; and now the low shores are receding fast in the distance, and the bright walls and brown tiles and pleasant friends fade out again into the past and the forever.

Thursday, 12th.—We are glad of this opportunity to know a thoroughly

English ship-captain, officers, crew, custom, and discipline. Nothing can be better fitted to inspire confidence than the fresh, honest, intelligent face of Captain B——, with his rough sailor dress, and manners whose bluntness cannot conceal the completely affable and well-bred gentleman under them.

The passengers are so few that we are beginning to know them all. Various miscellaneous gentlemen of as many different nations; three or four Spanish ladies and gentlemen, some with children and servants; captain's daughter and ourselves, complete the list. One of the Spaniards, who is to leave wife and eldest son in New York while he goes with the youngest son, a poor little sea-sick thing, to Germany, to school, speaks English and French with some fluency, while—a not unfrequent occurrence in Cuban families—the wife knows and cares only for Spanish. He has been pronouncing difficult Spanish words to me while his pretty wife laughs kindly at my attempts and helps him in his self-appointed task. So what with this novel sociality and a summer sea as beautiful and almost as calm as the sky, we get, instead of sea-sickness, delicious sleep and rare gusto for this English roast beef; instead of enervation, health that waxes with every hour.

Evening.—Nothing could be more enchanting than this air and sunshine, this bright crystal sea, this gently-moving ship, this entire voyage. A few low reefs and coral islands are becoming visible with our glasses; also many vessels lying quietly here and there,—wreckers I am told, which do a most flourishing business in these regions; indeed I learn that wrecking is the chief and all-absorbing occupation of Nassau, for which we are bound.

If genuine storms and honest ignorance of these dangerous passages do not supply a sufficient number of wrecks to satisfy the gambling tastes of the wreckers, and of the merchants who make fortunes by their spoils, it is found easy enough to make bargains with unprincipled captains, by which, for a certain sum, a wreck can be achieved at a given time with unfailing certainty. This is so managed that captain and wreckers shall make a comfortable little speculation of the affair and nobody lose anything except the all unsuspecting insurance company or the innocent owners of the vessel.

Nassau, New Providence, Royal Victoria Hotel, April 13th.—After being rocked gently to sleep, and then sung into deep slumbers all night by these pure-voiced ocean nurses, I was awakened this morning by the firing of guns announcing our entrance in the bay of Nassau. This city is to be our destiny for the next month, at the end of which the next regular steamer goes north. It is thought prudent to graduate in this way the change from the heat of Havana to the probable cold of New

York.

We hung on deck to reconnoitre this little item of our future, and to find ourselves anchored in the brightest, lightest possible pea-green water, through which the clean, beautiful bottom is so clearly revealed, that the numerous swarming boats seem to be floating in an atmosphere only a little more dense and colored than the delicious nectar we are breathing.

While waiting for the inevitable custom-house officer, we lean over the deck railing to watch this phantom loveliness, and the boatmen that are urging us in English that sounds as droll as did the Spanish at first in Havana, to buy their wares. These consist of the only exports of the island,—sponges, bananas, pineapples; some of the larger boats have the bottoms covered with living turtles, others are half full of huge conch shells, or varieties of smaller shells arranged regularly in partitioned boxes.

Presently the captain comes and points out the just arrived custom-house officer, a regal-looking negro, dressed in uniform. While B— goes with him to examine the luggage, the captain shows us the white pilot-boat from which one of his men was knocked overboard on the last voyage, by the rough waves in this bay. The negroes who were rowing him fled in affright: before help could arrive he had gone down for the last time, and was never seen again. But a few days after, a shark was caught and killed, and safely in his stomach lay the man's hand, immediately recognizable by the sleeve and cuff; beside it lay a goat's head and horns, and various other trophies of a shark's victories.

But now we must go: the boat waits for us here, and the hotel carriage on shore. A farewell with our Spanish friends, by whose cards I find, as I have before been informed, that the husband and wife in Cuba have distinctly different names; the name on the card of one gives you no clue to name or address of the other.

An English carriage brought us up the English road, past the English faces to the English-built hotel here on the hill, overlooking the English town, the bright bay, and outstretched ocean that owe allegiance to Her Majesty. Even the hotel belongs to the British government.

The high upper parlor opens upon a piazza commanding a noble and extensive view. While waiting here for my room,—its occupants go north in this steamer,—a quiet, elderly gentleman, with much blandness and benevolence in his not extraordinary face, entered, and sitting down by the table addressed some kind and casual remarks,

evidently intended to make a stranger feel at home, while I, tired of this long silent sitting and waiting, was glad enough of any change. On going down stairs I found I had been conversing with ex-President P —, who has been here since January for the health of his invalid wife, and also possibly to find a place where he can escape being lionized, and enjoy the retired literary leisure of which he is fond.

At half-past two came dinner. It is so late in the season, that not more than a dozen guests are left. Turtle soup of nicest and freshest quality commenced the ceremony, turtle pie helped to continue it, so did turtle steak, otherwise you might imagine yourself at an ordinary American hotel except that beef and mutton, and ducks and chickens, appear in an excellent state of mummification, as if they had all died of a lingering consumption, and would severally assist us to follow their example. The climate of the tropics is ill-adapted to our domestic animals. We are told that the best American cows die here after a few months, even if brought in the fall. Still it is a question, if want of care, and a general shiftlessness in all matters of the sort, have not more sins of animal murder to answer for than this delicious climate. The residents confess as much. By the way, can you guess the proper, legitimate name of the natives of New Providence? Not, as they are sometimes called, “Bahamaites,” or “Nassauers,” or “West Indians,” but Conchs.

This evening our first drive; pleasant, but exhausting, I much fear; all that the island has of novelty or interest, measuring, as it does, only fourteen miles in length and eight in width. In the first place, it is not only founded upon a rock, but it is a rock; the debris of coral reefs up to within a few inches of the surface. This surface is clothed with a light soil, which in the country is clothed with a light verdure, mostly of shrubs, briars, and weeds, interspersed here and there with stray dwarfed palms and cocoas. Occasionally the curious cotton-tree is found, with wide patriarchal branches covered with delicate green leaves, or else with a long, large pod full of perfect cotton to all appearances, perhaps intents, but not purposes, for it is proved to be useless. The roots of this tree, doubtless for want of soil, grow very much out of the ground, living in the air almost as much as the branches. In the town and its suburbs, oranges, bananas, sabadillas, mangoes, etc., are cultivated extensively, giving the whole place from a distance the air of an inhabited garden.

The streets and roads are a phenomenon. Every one is of solid rock covered with some kind of cement most dazzling to the eyes in its whiteness; so much so, that strangers are advised to never go out without veils. I see many of the inhabitants wearing blue and green glasses. But no rain or drought can affect them; never mud, never

dust; always as smooth and white and clean as the cement floors in the parlors of Havana.

I am more than anything else impressed with the quantity and quality of the negro element. There are, according to statistics, eight black to one white person, but in passing the streets you would suppose the pepper to be more than the rule, and the salt less than the exception. Bless me! how they bubble and swarm in every street, every corner, every alley, every hut; to each man two women, to each woman at least a dozen babies; and men, women, and children always idle, and intensely contented with their idleness; fat, and lusty, and happy, and good-for-nothing. I think no one can come from a slave country to this without acknowledging the obtrusive difference, the increased appearance of happiness; if jolly contentedness can be called so. And rapidly as they increase in the States, no colored fertility can match this, where babies are undoubtedly indigenous to the soil, cuticle though it is. Every way I turn I expect to see a head just budding from the ground, hands sprouting, wool germinating, or possibly a foot grown uppermost, with the rest of the dawning body just bursting from the ground, and like Milton's hind, or calf, or some other quadruped in Eden, "pawing to get free."

If I were to ask one of these bouncing negresses, as Willis did, what curiosity or product peculiar to the island I could find to carry home, I should unquestionably get the same answer,—except that his, being on the island of Martinique, was in French,—“*Bien que les enfants. En voulez-vous?*”

Saturday, April.—This evening a drive on the “Eastern Road,” the Paseo of Nassau.

I thought the air in Cuba unparalleled, but this is freer, purer; an always fresh and warm-enough seabreeze. It has a richness, roundness, completeness; it is not a thin, sharp, cutting melody, but a perfectly elaborated harmony. In what a gentle, healing affectionate way it possesses one, interpenetrating all the sensitive fevered fibres of the lungs like a blessing, or like a spirit full of blessings, bringing with it vitality, repose, and life!

In our drive we met all the beau monde of Nassau, the government officers and families, with their always English faces and figures, which are in strikingly redundant contrast with the consumptive Americans seated up and down our hotel table. One thing assures me that I am not in Spanish Cuba, with her tenacity for national customs and habits; a tenacity for which I, coming from the shifting fancies of Yankeedom, sincerely honor her. It is this: We are once more in a land of gloves and

bonnets. How stiff are these London exported bonnets compared with those exquisitely graceful Spanish veils, or prettier hair-ornamented Spanish heads; and as for the gloves, I can now understand without surprise that when Cubans first saw foreigners wearing gloves they supposed them used to hide some frightful blemish or deformity.

Our drive lay along the shore of this extraordinary bay, with its long parallel lines of brightest, lightest blue and pea-green, contrasting with the dark ultramarine purples and browns of all hues and densities, sometimes shading into each other, again preserving themselves, in spite of all republican efforts of the wind, clearly distinct. The cause of this phenomenon, I am told, is still a disputed question among the scientific. On the other side of the bay are built the cottages of wreckers and fishermen, the latter including those who dive for sponges, many of which we saw lying about in immense heaps; also those who dive for conch shells, which are exported in large quantities to France to be used in various artistic manufactures. The shores are covered with superannuated and dilapidated conchs, bleaching in the sun and calcining in the waves.

Another novelty is the turtle houses, built of poles out in shallow water, in such a way that the water can get freely in and out, while the self-roofed crawlers do neither the one nor the other.

X.

The Military Church—The Zouave Costume—Sunday come again—Twilight Rambles—The Kirk—Miscegenation—A Private Misery—The Old Fort—Lazy Negroes—Wrecking—The Town Library—Shopping—The Zouave Band—The Search for Coolness—The Government House—Silver key—Buying Shellwork—Nassau grows Purgatorial—Farewell to Nassau.

Sunday, April 15th.

ONE of the ladies having invited me to accompany her to the military church, we started early, hoping to arrive in time for the military music and procession, but both were over. Everybody was quietly assembled in the church, a plain, old-fashioned building, with large windows wide open, and between them numerous tablets and inscriptions. Two clergymen officiated; the English officers occupied the front pews; a few chance visitors besprinkled the body of the church, while thickly packed in the background, or blackground, were the soldiers with tall, fine forms, Moorish features, and jet-black skins. The gallery was also

filled by them; the services and hymns were played by their band, and sung by their choir; all the colored people above and below responded heartily from open prayer-books during the entire service, and listened with intelligent interest to the sermon. This was a farewell discourse from their young pastor of the last year: it was appropriate in spirit, but so mouthed and mumbled that I scarcely comprehended a word of it.

When, at last the services were over, the black soldiers,—for all the soldiers on the island are black,—with their white officers, filed in a long procession while performing certain military evolutions, and then marched off to the music of a quiet march.

A novel feature of all this was the quaint and picturesque Zouave costume of the soldiers, which has within a few months been adopted, —the bright red embroidered jacket, white sleeves, full blue Turkish trousers, caught just below the knee into a leathern leggin which half conceals the shoe; the pretty red cap, with a white turban twisted gracefully around the crown, from which hangs a huge yellow silk tassel,—all this entire wild and oriental dress harmonizes so completely with these black, well-formed, often handsome faces and stately forms, and with this gorgeous sunlight and tropical brightness of coloring everywhere, that these soldiers seem things wholly unique and original, beings born just as they are from the burning maternal heart of this bounteous nature. How mean and modern these Parisian-dressed men looked beside them! Never were stove-pipe hats so high and stiff—mathematical tailoring so prim and prosaic and square cut! [A]

[A] The Zouave costume having been so universally worn by soldiers of the United States, since the above was written, it has, of course, lost what was its greatest charm—its novelty.

In every thing we constantly see the complete dissimilarity of the islands of Cuba and New Providence, and in nothing more than in the recognition of Sunday. A few hours' sail floats you down through centuries; from much poetry, it is true, alas! to much prose, but nevertheless from the dark ages to one of civilization, and from a chain of weeks linked together by no golden clasp into a country where one seventh of the time the Presence comes so near that you can hear—if you have ears to hear—the trailing of its robes down the dismal steps of all the following week.

Monday, 16th.—Last evening we commenced a twilight ramble which terminated at the kirk.

As our walk had been a little long, we sat down to rest, before arriving,

on a little retired rock, commanding bay, city, and clouds of perfumes from neighboring gardens. Presently a tremendous explosive sound took place just behind us, and continued on in a perpetual thundering till we came near being as much petrified as the rock under us. I had only sense enough left to discover that it was undoubtedly the church-bell inviting to the house of quiet. But why so tremendous a summons? Is it to ring out the piety of the entire island? or to break into shivering fragments the after-dinner naps of the church-goers? or to deafen them in defence of the stupid sermon to come? or perchance it may be to call the mermaids and respectable shell-conchs, and other residents of the surrounding vasty deep? With my questions still unanswered, we arose to go, and on turning the first corner found that close behind the wall where we had been sitting, in a little low shelter for the purpose, situated in the remotest corner of the church grounds, was the ordinary-sized bell, that had seemed terrifically loud, not from its size, but from its proximity. Why this wretched attempt at a campanile is preferred to our method of enthroning the bell on the pinnacle of the temple, I cannot divine.

The kirk we found even plainer and less tasteful than the established church of the morning. The noble-faced but prosy clergyman, a Presbyterian in gown and scarf of the Episcopal clergy; the excellent though a little shrill-voiced choir, composed entirely of mulattoes. Just before services began, a handsome lady, well dressed, and whiter than myself, walked into one of the central pews, followed by a tall, equally well dressed and perfectly black husband. This is the only negation of races I have seen, and I cannot tell if it is often paralleled.

Monday evening.—I impart to you a private piece of misery. My windows overlook, and, still worse, overlisten the poultry yard, where med-lays and mêlées and sound-lays make the “nights hideous,” as well as the mornings. The reason is, these West Indian chickens have no respect for almanacs. They not only ignore the comings and goings of the sun, but they have no shadow of respect for his definite intentions that everybody should sleep in his absence. In short, which means in long, very long, they crow all night, insisting on waking at eleven o’clock to inform me that the daylight has gone, just as conscientiously as at one to assert that it is coming, and at four to suggest that it has just arrived. The geese, the turkeys, the guinea-hens, and, most vociferous of all, the ducks, are equally assiduous in performing their vocal responsibilities. No wonder they turn to universal lungs and come on the table pathetic carcasses, painful relics, poultryitic proof that bipeds fare best when sound is sacrificed to substance.

A drive this evening on the “Western Road,” which, like all the other

roads, is of smooth solid rock. It lies along the sea shore, where shells are said to abound; but my enthusiasm, as well as feet, was sadly dampened by fruitless searchings on the sharp wave-riddled rocks, and the equally infertile sand-beach.

A little way out of town stand the curious ruins of a fort, built by the Spaniards when they possessed this island; for you must know, it was handed about from one government to another, changing hands half a dozen times or more before England could get a secure hold. Victoria now finds it a constant drain on her treasury, but, good mother that she is! her feeble children are nourished and supported with no less fidelity than that with which the strong ones sustain her.

The fort is circular, with a curious pointed, perfectly solid wing on one side, the design of which nobody can now discover. Another fort, built by the Spaniards on the hill opposite my window, has the same singular appendage, which is, however, well preserved and appropriated to some military use.

The ruined fort which we passed possesses a subterranean passage, leading to the government house, in which are numerous mysterious apartments, having the always-attractive reputation of being haunted. At various times, various ladies and gentlemen have undertaken to penetrate them, but these irreverent pursuers of spirits under difficulties are always summarily dismissed by the inhospitable ghost.

Farther on, we found numerous desolated plantations, presided over by dilapidated country houses. It is universally found, that since the emancipation of the slaves, some thirty years since, the impoverished owners are obliged to abandon their estates.

The negroes now cannot be coaxed or hired or driven to work more than is absolutely necessary to keep soul and body from a divorce. No public improvements have been built since the emancipation. It is doubtless true that the wrecking trade, which of late years is become so flourishing, has, in its speculating, I may say gambling, influences, had a tendency to destroy legitimate industry. What is the use of working their black fingers to the bone, when any day an ill wind may blow them enough good or goods to make everybody rich? when any wind that is good for anything, and knows what it is about, comes to them dressed in silks and satins of the latest fashion, sometimes with a Paris bonnet on its head, sometimes loaded with jewelry which it lays at their feet, and begs they will be good enough to accept as a present.

April 17th.—The town library is well filled with books, excellently bound, none of them in paper or muslin. It has also a respectable

number of curiosities; there we pass a pleasant early morning hour.

To-day my first shopping excursion in Havana. We heard enticing accounts of the great bargains to be made here, not only in wrecked goods, but in English importations free of duty. I found, however, nothing of the sort; on the contrary, heaps of wrecked and damaged goods lying about the doors of the shops, or strewn upon the sidewalks; mostly sell as high as the same thing uninjured in New York.

These merchants are constantly in the practice of wetting and wilting their superannuated goods in salt water and then displaying them as wrecked articles, thus imposing on foreigners and ignorant customers, who suppose that, as a matter of course, they are making “stunning bargains.”

After dinner, like everybody else, we drove to hear the Zouave band. On Tuesday and Friday afternoons they find themselves the centre of a large admiring carriage audience. On benches ranged immediately around them, are seated crowds of colored nurses with English infants, while older children are running and playing everywhere with the sweet inexhaustible happiness which children find in every clime under the sun.

These Africans play operatic music with expression as well as precision. Like all the negroes of these English islands, they are taught reading, writing, and the elements of an ordinary school education. The surgeon of the army tells me that their ready emotional nature and quickness for time and tune, nearly atone for the, to them, unattainable intellectual and artistic culture ordinarily necessary to the full expression of these musical compositions.

We everywhere find coolness the thing most sought by these adopted children of the sun. Witness their universal white linen umbrellas to whose blinding glare no coolness could ever reconcile me. Witness also the prevailing thick, white flannel coats, vests, and trousers worn by the gentlemen as a morning and business dress. In a country where dust and mud are matters of merely books and faith, and where perspiration is a matter for draughts of air to manufacture fevers of, this soft, cool, non-conducting dress has its advantages.

As we were coming out from tea this evening, General P—— called over the bannisters to know if we were ready for the usual game of whist. We found him in the upper parlor, seated opposite the rocking-chair, which nobody will occupy at whist but myself. I find in him qualities not often combined in a whist-player,—scientific skill, and what I am far more capable of appreciating, patience and kind

encouragement for the mistakes of his partner.

Wednesday evening, April 17th.—This morning the General knocked at our door to say that the United States Consul would be here at half-past three, with his carriage, to carry us up to the Government House, this being the reception day of Mrs. B——, its mistress. We went, accordingly, to find the walks and house filled with coming and going guests. On sending in cards we were at once ushered into the drawing-room, where was her ladyship seated in one corner of a sofa, without crinoline, which she has never worn. There is character for you! Her dress and cap were of some gauzy material tintured with purple; the same color looked from the underside of her point lace collar and cuffs, and after my turn was over for commonplaces, I had leisure, or seized it from the stupid conversation of Doctor somebody on the other side of me, to discover that the lady's face was full of culture and spirit, and that her high-toned guests perfectly agreed with me in the opinion. A grand piano occupied one side of the octagon room, its polished feet, like those of its mistress, standing upon a bare, shining oak floor; the wide open windows commanded a triple view of sea, valley, and forest. As we came out Mr.——, the graceful bachelor consul, registered our names in a book kept for the purpose and then brought us home.

Friday, April 20th.—A boat ride yesterday morning, followed by a long exhausting walk on the bare beach of Hog Island, which lies stretched out in front of Nassau for the apparent purpose of making a harbor. All this fatigued out of me every writing possibility. But to-day we sailed delightfully over to Silver Key, one of the many uninhabited little islands that lie within a few hours' sail of Nassau. The gentlemen were obliged to wade from the boat to the shore; the ladies were curiously carried in the arms of the sailors. But we soon forgot the awkwardness of this novel locomotion in the exciting pleasure of collecting the pretty shells, corals, sea-fans, and sea-stars, with which we loaded our pockets, pocket-handkerchiefs, and the arms of the sailors and gentlemen.

Our sailors insist that all these little islands still contain gold and silver, buried long ago by the pirates, who first of all discovered and inhabited them. It is true that a fruitless expedition from the United States once came to make search.

As we passed down the bay, we had a new view of the two or three "slavers" that lie at anchor. One of them was years ago tossed on the shore and nearly wrecked by a tornado. The others are noble ships left deserted to waste and decay in the storms and sunshine. They are fair but doomed and desolate monuments of a foul traffic, and of a silent wrath which corrodes their falling masts and haunts like black ghosts

their misery-memoried cells.

April 21st.—This afternoon looking for shell-work, for which Nassau is famous. Among other manufactures, we found two maiden sisters living alone in a little rose-vined cottage. The room was full of natural curiosities, drawings, and a variety of handiwork discoursing decided taste and talent. They sold me some very curious sponges and sea-fans, and kindly gave me a spirited drawing in water colors, representing a native woman carrying her baby in a bag on her back, according to a very general custom here. We found these maidens truly intelligent and polite. Since our return we learn that their mother was a perfectly black negro, their father formerly a governor of the island.

We ended our drive by visiting a famous banyan-tree, and by an attempt to stretch it, which hordes of provokingly critical mosquitoes frustrated. This tree most commonly grows as a parasite on the Pride of India, a fine native tree, which is often at last hugged to death by its soi-distant friend.

Returned home after dark, past cottages and country-houses in which not a single light was burning, a precautionary defence against mosquitoes.

May 7th.—All these languid days a constant south wind, bringing intense incapacity for every effort. My pen, a seldom skipping grasshopper, is indeed become a burden; it refuses to help me “lift the weight of the superincumbent hour,” even for you.

Our second week here made to us the fatal revelation that Nassau had exhausted its claims to interest. Since that time the heat alone has been enough to legitimize its claim to being a mild Purgatory, from which no prayers, penances, or even money could release us, there being no escape except by the monthly steamer.

A few pleasant events, it is true, have medicated this ennui. Amongst them was a musical soiree, for which General P—— procured us tickets, an amateur affair for benevolent purposes. It had a charming duett or two on the harp and piano, one on the cornet, extremely graceful. Then there was an evening out to tea; then there were a few kindly lent books. But the crowning event was the welcome advent of the steamer on its way to Havana, once more establishing us in a world from which we seem to have been vanished a century. It brought fresh news, fresh letters, fresh promises of home.

Floods of rain came too, at last, drowning out the heat, baptizing these

air-gormandizing trees, filling the drained wells with assurances that we will not just now

“Die of thirst with all the waters near.”

It is a curious fact that the tide rises and falls regularly every day in these wells. With the exception of one or two small lakes in the interior, no other water is found on the island, which may help to explain the fact that it had no indigenous animals.

Thursday night, May 10th.—I sit alone by the waxen taper in my room to write my parting with Nassau—to end for the present my pen-peregrinations. But I fear I cannot muster one decorous sigh for the occasion. Everybody is going; there will be many partings but few farewells. I will leave with you and with memory those tropical experiences, knowing that, whatever you may do with them, memory is like all other sextons—he buries more than he exhumes. The full-packed trunks, carpet-bags, and boxes of curiosities around me, are welcome reminders that early to-morrow morning the good ship Karnak will breathe a welcome breath through her two great red nostrils and will wind and puff her way around the lighthouse in search of us.

THE END.